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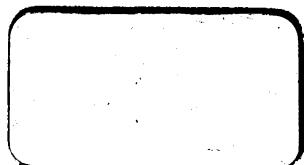


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Paul M. Williams

T H E C Z A R I N A:

AN

HISTORICAL ROMANCE

OF

THE COURT OF RUSSIA.

BY MRS. HOFLAND.

"Verily,
I swear, 'tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glittering grief,
And wear a golden sorrow."

SHAKESPEARE.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

NEW-YORK:

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T H E C Z A R I N A.

CHAPTER I.

The court of Catherine the First, in the year 1736, recovered somewhat of the gayety which had been diminished by the death of Peter the Great the preceding year; for, although this enlightened but eccentric monarch despised the routine of splendid frivolity and magnificent fopperies generally attached to the circles of royalty, he regularly encouraged them by every other medium than his presence. His widow, who succeeded him, and sought most conscientiously to carry out his views, well knew that the rich man's luxuries give the poor man bread; that the gorgeous trappings of the great furnish necessaries to the mechanic's cottage; that the inventions of Genius, in adorning palaces and ornamenting the possessors of rank, at once add refinement to wealth, and give reward to merit: though devoid of education and scant of knowledge, the benevolence of her heart sufficed to furnish the deficiencies of her mind, wherever the welfare of her subjects became the object of her attention.

With these views of the subject, she had peculiar pleasure in celebrating a victory by giving a magnificent ball in honour of a young soldier, who, serving under one of Peter's old generals, had found the opportunity of distinguishing himself in the most remarkable manner on the confines of Persia. His conquest of the Prince of Dagestan secured simultaneously the honours of war and the blessings of peace, and stamped him alike a hero and a patriot.

Of course the female nobility were impatient to see one who had appeared among them as a brilliant comet, for he was not more glorious than new, although of the highest and most ancient order of Russian nobility. Prince Theodore Dolgourouki was the heir to the illustrious house of that name, being the only son of Prince Lubitsch Dolgourouki. He was younger by three or four years than Count Ivan, who was the son of Bazilitch Dolgourouki, and was already well known at the court of Petersburgh as a man of decided abilities, quiet, but determined ambition, and talents for intrigue likely to make their way during the reign of a female sovereign. The head of the Dolgourouki was the aged but still active Field-marshal Prince Bazilitch; and, as he had never married, and was possessed of immense wealth and that power which fine understanding and spotless reputation bestow, he was naturally looked up to by the fathers and their sons as an object of veneration and affection.

At his suggestion, both these young men had been educated abroad, all learning being at a low ebb in Russia during that period when the monarch who sought with unwearied energy to improve it had been consigned, sword in hand, to fight for the country he desired to benefit. Ivan was placed in a convent of Jesuits in Genoa at an early age; and, being associated with many young Italian noblemen, who superadded

the graces of personal accomplishment to the learning of the cloister, he returned to his own country what was termed "an accomplished gentleman," capable of winning fame and enjoying it, and blending, in a singular manner, the prejudices of high birth, the nourished enmities of a cunning and revengeful spirit, with the apparent devotion of a loyal and devoted heart.

Theodore Dolgourouki spent his boyhood with a tender mother, who devoted all the powers of a spacious and cultivated mind to the formation of his. When, in his fifteenth year, he had the misfortune to lose her, he was removed from home, less for instruction than that change of scene which might relieve his sorrow, to the house of a German Baron, who in due time placed him with his own son in the University of Leyden, where the following years of his minority were passed with equal improvement and happiness. Circumstances, on his return, had favoured his joining the army, the result of which had placed him in the way of the highest preferment with his sovereign, and given him that celebrity which is always dazzling and frequently dangerous, both to the possessor and his admirers, who are more frequently the fair and young of the softer sex, than the sage and aspiring of his own.

Strange to say, Theodore was neither vain nor ambitious; the noble simplicity, the acquired philosophy, of his mind rendered him incapable of the first; and the early lessons, the matured studies, of his life taught him to renounce the second on principle. In joining the army, in achieving conquest (which was alike the result of great personal courage and of mental energy), he knew that he had attained the position of a man among men, free to think and to act for himself on all the material points which affect character and happiness. The warmth of his heart, the acuteness of his feelings, his habitual obedience in childhood, and the high qualities with which love and distaste had invested his only parent, rendered it likely that he should tread in the steps of his father, or we might say his family; but as he was aware of their tendency, had weighed them well and rejected them determinately, it now remained to be seen how far so young a man was capable of maintaining the dignity of his nature by the consistency of his conduct.

These points were matters of little consideration with the mothers and daughters, now looking eagerly to the hour which should introduce them to the handsome and gallant youth who had won "golden opinions" from all; who was already in possession of a fine property in right of his mother, would most probably be the heir of his great uncle, Prince Bazilitch, and was likely, from his rumoured abilities not less than his high birth, fine person, and superior acquirements, to supersede, perhaps to humble, the man who now ruled Russia in the name of the empress, and monopolized its honours not less

than its power; to whom every eye looked for preference, yet mingled scorn with supplication; to whom some were grateful and many submissive, but who was far more envied than admired, and at once surrounded by parasites and enemies.

Alexander Menzikoff, the prime minister of Catherine (who had been placed on the throne by his well-directed and well-merited efforts) was at this time in his forty-fifth year; his person was athletic, but by no means inelegant, and his bearing was that of a military man of high rank and long service; of one who had travelled much, had the power of accommodating himself to various courts and countries, yet retained, in the exercise of courtesy, an air of habitual command. Every one knew that he had sprung from humble life, but no one could point out, in his language or manner, a vestige of his origin. Those who were most angry with his exaltation, while they spoke of him as an upstart, and adverted to his birth and occupation in childhood, yet failed to establish any proof of the *parvenu* in his education and conduct. On the contrary, the most sagacious persons about the court admitted that the Czar never gave a more decisive proof of that discernment, which was one of his peculiar characteristics, than in calling into action the powers of this extraordinary man.

It was undoubtedly his beauty in boyhood, and the singular sweetness of his voice, which first drew the royal favour. Menzikoff, the pastry-cook's apprentice, cried his *pâtes* in the vicinity of the Kremlin; and Peter the Great, who in after-life was fascinated by the musical voice rather than the beauty of Catherine, yielded to the charm of the poor youth's cadences. When he had seen and questioned him, perceiving that nature had been not less bountiful to his mind than his person, he at once released him from his servitude, and commanded that he should become an inmate of his palace, and receive the benefits of education.

Menzikoff could already read and write—endowments far beyond his station, and which had been communicated to him by a young friend some years older than himself, of a superior grade in society, and who became tenderly attached to him in consequence of their being alike orphans. The little knowledge he had thus obtained made him eager for more; and, conscious of his own capabilities, he eagerly seized on the opportunities given him for improvement, and in the next three or four years had become a proficient in all modern languages, well read in history, and conversant in the *lettres belles*; but, as he had the wit to see that, in the present state of his country, and the situation of its brave but unfortunate sovereign, the sword, and not the pen, was the way to preferment, he held himself ready to adopt it so soon as he should be able to perform the duties of a soldier.

We have called Peter unfortunate, because he was at this time hunted like a stag by the implacable enmity of Charles XII. of Sweden, considered to be the hero of his age, and whom no extent of conquest could satisfy short of the destruction of the sovereign and the country, against whom his ferocious courage, aided by experience, was enlisted. Peter found that he must learn the art of war before he could reap the rewards of bravery; therefore, military

knowledge and indomitable courage soon became absolutely necessary to all who sought the favour of the sovereign, or desired the safety of their native country. At seventeen, Menzikoff entered on service, and, grateful, brave, and enterprising, soon proved that he richly deserved the favours already received, and would, ere long, have a right to preferment. Accustomed to labour and privation, he endured the extreme distresses of his royal master with cheerfulness; and, blessed with the buoyant spirits of youth, where others sank beneath the multiplied evils which surrounded them, he only foresaw the glory which must arise from overcoming their misfortunes.

The honour of the first victory over Charles was due to Menzikoff, who, at nineteen, was major-general; and, in Pultava, that well-fought but most terrible battle, which freed Russia from the most skilful and vindictive enemy she had ever encountered, the skilful manœuvres and effective valour of Menzikoff (who appeared endowed with the concentrated gifts of experience, observation, perseverance, and unwearied courage in the bloom of youth) gave the crown of conquest to his bleeding country and his long harassed sovereign, who made him henceforth Prince of Ingria, and showered on him riches and honours with an unsparing hand.

Other wars succeeded, and Menzikoff was always successful as a general, but was probably held of more value to the Czar for carrying into effect the formation of Cronstadt as a seaport, and St. Petersburgh as the future metropolis of his mighty empire. Indeed, at this period of Russian improvement, in which a resistless spirit and gigantic hand sought, with more of zeal than humanity, more of genius than wisdom, to civilize a barbarous but intelligent people, and carry the arts and resources of southern Europe into the "frozen regions of the north," we need not inquire where was Menzikoff?—for where was he not!—he was the right hand of his great master, who, in return, filled that hand with wealth, and strengthened it with power.

Once, and once only, did a shade pass over the brow of Peter, who, unquestionably, loved the plant he had distinguished and cultivated so happily. Deceived by others, the accumulation of his own gifts rendered him suspicious even of Menzikoff, whose style of living was so profuse, that it appeared to the Czar incompatible with even his splendid income, and he imposed on him an enormous fine, at the same time depriving him of the principality of Plescoff. A few days sufficed to convince the royal examiner that the enemies of Menzikoff had misled him, that the habits of the prince had been contracted in consequence of his acting as ambassador in foreign courts, where he sought to impress strangers with the wealth, importance, and elegance of Russia, and that he was not less unimpeachable in his integrity than superior in his taste and talents. Of course, his fine was remitted; his places restored, and his stolidity not less than his power increased to the end of Peter's life. Was a rebellious province to be reduced, Menzikoff was appointed the general—was a banquet or ball to be given, Menzikoff presided, receiving royalty and nobility with the grace of a courtier and the frankness of a soldier, while the mighty sovereign he represented dined in a distant apartment on the

plainest fare, glad to escape a scene which he held to be useful though irksome, and rejoiced to lay his burden on the shoulders of one so distinguished for his magnificence and suavity, versatility and self-possession.

CHAPTER II.

MENZIKOFF married a woman of rank and great personal beauty, superior education, and excellent disposition; and in their dwelling the sovereign spent his happiest hours, for he found there not only the society of superior minds, but that love and gratitude which every human being, however high his station, desires for his happiness. Here, too, he met that fair and unpretending girl, who stepped from the lowliest grade and the most perfect poverty to the throne of one whose dominions nearly circled the globe. Catherine, maintained by charity in her infancy, and deprived by death of her parents and protector, even in childhood earned her own bread in servitude, and, in the house of a Lutheran minister of piety and benevolence named Gluck, gained so much instruction as to become a kind of nursery-governess to his children, although she never attained the art of writing beyond that of signing her name.

Marienbourg, where she lived, was besieged and taken on the day when, although scarcely fifteen, she had married a young man, who was slain in defending the city. The wretched girl was drawn by the soldiery out of an oven, into which she had fled for shelter; and General Bauer, struck by her youth, beauty, and extreme distress, caused her to be conveyed to his own quarters; but, shortly afterward, with a prudence and generosity most honourable to his character, and which was worthy to stamp his memory as the Russian Scipio, he procured for her the friendship of the Princess Menzikoff, then newly married. With this excellent lady she lived as a companion—for the benevolence of the young is rarely stinted—and her singular misfortunes, her simplicity, youth, and loveliness, gave the widowed maid an interest in every bosom. Here she was frequently seen by the Czar, who found that her sweet and gentle voice could calm his anger, sooth his sorrow, and excite his cheerfulness. At this period he had been in love with a merchant's daughter, who, considering his views dishonourable, and fearing to awaken his resentment by her rejection, uniting the romance of youth with the decision of virtue, had clandestinely fled from home to the distant dwelling of her nurse, and having literally adopted the most perfect seclusion, was at this time believed, both by her friends and her lover, to be dead. The novelty and beauty of Catherine, in time, not only consoled the Czar for her loss, but awoke a more active flame. Two years, however, passed before Peter the Great obtained his own consent for his marriage with Catherine, during which time, unquestionably, she became the object of his sincere esteem, not less than his affection. Never could any woman render exaltation more beneficial to others and amiable in herself than Catherine. She had a sound understanding and a tender heart—she was never more happy than when enriching and rewarding the friends of her infancy; but she carefully avoided em-

ploying them in state affairs, or in any way interfering with the politics of the country. Frankness of manners and simplicity of mind were her most striking qualities; but, yet, considering that her high station demanded dignity of deportment, she assumed it gracefully, and Peter himself frequently exulted in the splendour and propriety of her dress, and the majesty of her carriage.

It must be supposed that the empress was fondly attached to the Menzikoff family; and, as it was understood by all that the prince and the army he commanded had placed her on the throne, notwithstanding the grandson of Peter was evidently the true heir, it may be supposed at this time she felt towards her prime minister not less gratitude than affection. That the emperor had made a will in her favour was undoubtedly; but, as the testament remained unsigned, room was given to suspect a change in the royal intention, on which it became the nobility and ministers to deliberate; but the eagerness and eloquence of Menzikoff, the distress of the weeping and agitated widow, who appeared loth to accept the honours he offered her, and declared that her life should be devoted to the welfare of the young prince, the *true* heir—the memory of her benevolence, humility, and consistency, conspired to overcome the doubts, or awaken the hopes, of those around; and she became empress by acclamation. Menzikoff, her most highly-endowed subject, her active minister, the *protégé* of her illustrious husband, and the friend of her own helpless youth, combined, of course, all possible claims on her abiding friendship, and was, in fact, as necessary to her government as she could be to *his* aggrandizement.

On the night when our tale commences, Menzikoff, by the welcome command of his sovereign, first presented his eldest daughter in public to the empress, who had known and loved her from her birth. If there were many eyes eager to gaze on young Dolgourouki, so were there many eager to examine the daughter of one who held wealth and honours in his gift, and whose wife was alike lovely and beloved by all. The question ran, "Will she have her father's pride, or her mother's gentleness? Will her beauty be that of nature or art?"

Ivan Dolgourouki wore the sneer of contempt on his lip when he spoke of the "pastry-cook's puff;" but Theodore held his judgment in abeyance—though so long resident among the Germans, he did not believe a man's merit or a woman's beauty exactly dependant on heraldic distinctions, and he honoured the late Czar for those noble exertions on behalf of his country, which belonged to the bettering of our common humanity rather than its privileged classes.

All the company had assembled, and many of the principal nobility were pressing round Theodore and the Field Marshal, when the Princess Menzikoff appeared, leaning on Count Sapieha, the most favoured friend of her husband, who, with his beautiful daughter on his arm, immediately proceeded to the canopied seat of the empress, who received her most affectionately, kissing her cheek, and seating her among the princesses of her family.

All those little groups who were collected in various places for the purposes of conversation immediately divided, and permitted the star of the evening to be seen: well might Mary Men-

zikoff be styled such, for she was literally blazing with jewels. Parental fondness, on the one part, had sought to embellish the beauty of its object; and a desire to outshine all competitors, and duly honour her introduction on the other, had rendered the sweet girl rather an exhibition than a charm, and, in the excesses of her brilliance, her beauty was diminished. Still, it must be acknowledged by all who approached her, that, although her form was scarcely developed, its graceful lightness and commanding height were evident, and her countenance was as admirable in expression as faultless in feature, while the dazzling fairness of her complexion seemed allied to more than earthly beauty, and revealed every emotion of her heart, whether suggested by grateful affection or gratified self-love, with that blushing simplicity so interesting in early life, and so rare in courtly circles.

"You will have to dance with our young queen of diamonds, Theodore," said Ivan; "take care she does not set your heart in a blaze, for I question if even a prince of the strong hand* can be accepted for such a moving El Dorado as that."

"I am not likely to offer it—a parterre of flowers is more to my taste than a jeweller's cabinet; but she is very lovely, Ivan, and, remember, she did not dress herself. Besides, who can wonder that her parents loaded with finery one of whom they must be very proud! We should make allowance for their feelings."

"Allowance for Menzikoff! allowance for the insolent upstart, who perks his flaming minx amid the royal sisters, bedizzened with the wealth of kingdoms! Allowance for—"

The exclamations of Ivan were cut short by the fulfilment of his own predictions, for, by the command of the empress, Theodore became the partner of the blushing and almost trembling Mary. A short time, however, served to restore her to self-possession, since, although she had never appeared in so large a circle before, and was for the first time dressed as a woman, and decorated with brilliants, she had been taught to consider the royal family as her personal friends, and to see in her father's house all who could be considered great or distinguished. She was, therefore, soon capable of conversing in the intervals of the dance with that ease which the habit of society alone bestows, and that quiet elegance of distinction which proves an acquaintance with books, and a constant intercourse with the best company. Simplicity and good sense might be termed the characteristics of her mind; but it was not difficult to perceive that, when more familiar, the spell thrown by a poetic imagination would also embellish the flow of familiar intercourse.

The slight prejudice excited by her gorgeous appearance, or the vituperation of his cousin Ivan, had disappeared, and Theodore felt disposed to bask in the light of those mild eyes which contrasted with the gems above them, when a lady hurriedly addressed Mary, saying, the Princess Menzikoff had fainted, and was carried into the adjoining apartment.

"My mother, my dear mother!" cried the fair girl, catching the eye of her informer as it glanced towards the place thus specified, towards which she flew, followed by Theodore.

They found the princess supported by the empress, and surrounded by many ladies, eager to offer assistance, but evidently injuring her they sought to serve. Mary in the crowd saw only her beloved and suffering parent, and remembered only that which love and duty dictated. Gently but firmly she prevailed on all to leave the room save the empress and another friend; and, by her skill not less than her tenderness, soon succeeded in recalling life to the pallid cheek of the patient, on whom her eyes were fixed with such an intense expression of inquiry, as proved to Theodore (who was standing near the door of the apartment, earnestly gazing on both) that the causes assigned for her mother's indisposition did not suffice to the alarmed daughter. He read, in the mournful expression which succeeded to that of painful surprise, that the fair girl, whose path seemed strewn with roses, had tasted sorrow for another's wo, that her sensibility was as acute as her affections were warm, and that no love of conquest, consciousness of beauty, or even care for appearance, actuated for a moment that pure bosom, now moved by the most holy anxieties and sympathies which can reach a daughter's heart.

While Mary had been attending to her mother by bathing her temples, and releasing her from her necklace, she had relieved her own head from the burden of her costly tiara, and her curling tresses fell in beautiful profusion round her face and upon her shoulders, shading the pale but still beautiful face of her mother, as it now reclined in partial revival on her breast. A few whispered words awoke agitation which dispelled the remaining faintness, for tears now rose to the eyes of the princess, and rolled slowly down her cheek, while answering drops were seen in those of the tender daughter, though she used her utmost efforts to repress them. Theodore felt that he had never seen so beautiful and interesting a picture—never been so sensible of the power of sympathy to attract and endear by virtuous emotion those who were calculated by similar virtues, tastes, and disposition to be the world to each other. He had heard of love, he had read of its emotions, and he could have fancied that even now he experienced them; that a tie of affection, profound in its intense depth, sublime in its unselfish purity, was forming in his heart, uniting him to that fair daughter, and through her to that excellent mother, which would henceforth govern his existence.

Whatever might be the visions of that momentous time, they were rudely banished by the arrival of Menzikoff, who, with an air at once haughty and alarmed, entered to inquire after his lady, and see her safely into the carriage. The empress had returned to her company some minutes before, and he suggested that, if possible, the princess should pay most gratefully the parting compliments of the evening, adding, "Indeed you must do so, for my gracious sovereign has just presented me with the palace of Oranienbaum—the most magnificent gift ever bestowed on a subject."

"Oh! it is too—too much, Alexander."

As the princess spoke, she relapsed into the state from which she had so lately recovered, and it was found necessary to carry her into the air, from whence she was removed to her carriage, and, accompanied by her daughter, proceeded home. When the prince returned to

* The meaning of Delgourouki is "the strong, or sovereign hand," in the ancient Russ.

the apartment. Theodore remarked to him that the Princess Mary had left her tiara on the table.

"That is just like a woman," said he, pettishly; "they are never right without these bawbles, yet utterly neglectful of them when snared."

"The Princess Mary increased her beauty when she relinquished her jewels," said Theodore, in the tone of a man who is merely soliloquizing; but a thought, thus carelessly expressed, was a compliment from a Dolgourouki. Another courtier, whose ideas were elicited by the words, exclaimed, "And how extremely like your highness the princess looked when her hair was unbound."

Lucky mortal! the day following, his eldest son was made a colonel of dragoons.

But, perhaps, Theodore Dolgourouki was the more fortunate, for he found a small gold chain on the floor, which had fastened the neglected tiara, and which gave him a full right to present himself at the mansion of Menzikoff the day following. The Dolgourouki not unfrequently visited the minister, but it was always by command or request of the empress, a circumstance every branch of the family insisted upon as the means of self-justification. Theodore stood in no need of either: as a gentleman he must return what he had found.

With this resolve and consolation in his mind, he sallied forth, careless whither his footsteps led him, until he arrived on the banks of the Neva, where, like many other persons under strong mental excitement, he found somewhat tranquillizing to his spirit from contemplating the calm surface of the river, and calling up, as if from its placid depths, the images which had so lately occupied and entranced his spirit. He recalled, step by step, his observations on the person, the speech, and the conduct of Mary Menzikoff, and with his ideas of the daughter no recollections of the father were mingled. Every remembrance, whether of looks, words, or actions, showed him only improving yet perfect beauty, highly-cultivated mind, veiled by modest timidity and graceful reticence, with filial tenderness of the most absorbing and unselfish character. It was evident that she had become not less the friend of her mother's heart, than the child of her affections. Of course a wise man might be proud of his attachment to one so virtuous and enlightened. "Her personal attractions were only secondary in his eyes;" all lovers have this idea of their own discernment. Theodore was full of all good qualities and noble sentiments, but he was only twenty-two—who shall arraign his prudence, or question his right to deceive himself? Has not "Love's young dream" been life's best gift, whatever misery might attend the awakening?

The chain was restored—Mary was beheld in the simplicity of elegant morning costume, and those employments which bespeak mental activity and superior accomplishment. Her singing and music, her knowledge of Italian and German, her taste for drawing, mere especially as connected with architecture, towards which her father had particularly directed her attention, were all so many sources of sympathy in their mutual pursuits and mutual admiration of each other's acquirements. Theodore had an estate at Pozeeck, which he earnestly desired to improve for the benefit of his serfs;

and, as the Princess Menzikoff had been long employed in the same benevolent pursuit, having planted manufactories, extended agricultural knowledge, and been the manifest mother of a grateful people, on a scale of government less important but far more efficient than her husband's, it was but right that he should frequently consult with her on such subjects, and offer all possible plans to her inspection and Mary's observations.

At this time, Menzikoff was too much engrossed with his new and magnificent acquisition, to think much on any other subject, when the hours devoted to state affairs were disposed of. That these were well employed no one ever denied, for, being in high health, habituated to business of every description, well read in the designs of men, and not only ambitious of power, but proud of talent, and most happy in the exertion of energy, this remarkable man resembled, in his unfailing industry and comprehensive faculties, the extraordinary prince now seated on the throne of Russia. He was not only the *heart* of all business, but, in his power of attending to details and penetrating affairs, reigned in the *veins* and *arteries* also: while he grasped the highest concerns of the empire with ease, he neglected not the lowest, either from that haughtiness which was his most striking fault, or that self-indulgence which might have become an excusable weakness in one who had already done so much.

It will, however, be evident that such a man spent little time in his wife's boudoir, and that, however proud he might be of his beautiful daughter, he knew, in fact, but little of her character so far as it could be considered to be unfolded. He was blessed at this time with another fair girl, named Ulrica, who was scarcely one year younger than Mary, and an only son of the same age with the Grand Duke Peter. It might have been supposed that this youth would become an object of especial care, and the most lively interest to a father so ambitious; but the fact was, Menzikoff was much too busy a man to take care of his own family, and he well knew the high qualities and devoted attentions of their admirable mother were equal to the task imposed on her, and, although her delicate state of health frequently compelled her to reside at a considerable distance, he was always willing that she should be accompanied by her children, towards whom, however, he never showed any deficiency of affection when they came in his way, and always heard them praised with evident pleasure.

The princess, who in mind and heart was wholly wife and mother, although, in the beginning of her married life, she had been content to accept the glories for the pleasures of existence, yet looked fondly but vainly forward to that period when the husband she still idolized would be somewhat of a domestic companion to herself and her children. She had borne with painful heroism his absences with the army, had rejoiced to partake his cares, and share the grandeur she loved not in foreign countries, but her heart still pined after the tranquil comforts which had so long eluded her, and the present increase of honours and employments—the gift of the palace (which included the fatigues of company, and the cares of hospitality) threw her hopes of domestic happiness and the endearments of connubial and family affection still

farther from her. Hope sickened, and health declined, with the attached wife, in proportion as the fame and fortunes of her ambitious partner were extended; and that state of restless anxiety, of weakness, which is yet strong to suffer, of numerous yet indefinite ailments, which have since then been termed "nervous," became the painful state of her existence.

After this had continued till the round cheek became pale and shrunken, the once brilliant eye dim, and occasionally sightless, a more active enemy seized on the unhappy princess: she believed (and perhaps too truly) that her beloved Alexander had ceased to hold her dear, that ambition swayed his whole heart, and, having long induced neglect, had at length effected indifference. From this belief it was but a step to jealousy; the empress was of her own age, and, therefore, considerably younger than her husband; he had been for twenty years her confidential friend, in youth a generous brother, in more mature life a wise adviser, and at the present moment an unequalled minister. It was by his advice she obtained her husband's rescue at the battle of Pruth, in consequence of which Peter the Great crowned her with his own hands, and dictated the will which gave her the crown she wore. He had stood between her and the anger of the Czar when guilty of the folly of meeting the chamberlain on money matters, which cost the wretched man his life, and sent to Siberia the lady who accompanied her. At this very time, by remitting the capitulation tax, he had rendered her person adored, and her throne established, and the names of Catherine and Menzikoff resounded together through every cottage in all the Russias. Who should say that a softer sentiment might not spring from gratitude, and the habitual reliance of an amiable nature, rather gentle than firm? And for Menzikoff!—the ambitious and aspiring Menzikoff—how natural was it for him to seek at once a loveable woman and a mighty throne!

"I only (a frail and sinking being) am in the way, and, therefore, am I avoided, perhaps hated," said the stricken one. "Catherine, that Catherine who once hung on my looks, and worshipped the ground I trod on—she, whom I loved so kindly, whose interests I espoused so warmly, receives him daily as an empress, the very character to win a heart so constituted. She knows her own ignorance and insufficiency, and leans on him as a helpless woman. Thus he is seduced alike by the error and the generosity of his nature, and I am abandoned by the friend I loved, and the husband I have blameably adored. Nay, I am murdered—but slowly, alas! very slowly."

Had the agony inflicted by such thoughts been unrelieved by the cares and pleasures of maternity, and uncontrolled by religious submission, probably the end would have been nearer than the sufferer augured; but these unhappy anxieties were blended with others, which, though in themselves painful, ameliorated those which were more acute, and which can only be estimated truly by the wretched wife, who knows her person scorned, her affections trampled on, and her death desired. The princess only suspected this misfortune; and, when a few kind words, or a somewhat protracted visit at home reassured her, she then imputed his estrangement to his enlarged cares, the increased number of his enemies, and trembled for the continuance

of his prosperity, which included that of his helpless family. Thus she veered from one source of solicitude to another, and in all poor Mary necessarily partook, for she waited upon her as her shadow, and thus obtained a premature maturity of mind, an acuteness of feeling, combined with an exercise of the reflective faculties, which was at once her charm and her misfortune.

Theodore was taught by his own feelings when he saw the gay and the great (more especially gallant foreigners) paying court to Mary, to discover the principal cause of the Princess Menzikoff's uneasiness and consequent weakness; and, believing her doubts to be wholly without foundation, as far as the empress was concerned, and arising partly from her own exceeding modesty, which mistrusted attraction in herself and her husband's ambition and pride, which left room for no other passion or occupation, he sought, by every means he could devise, to restore her confidence in one party, and her friendship for the other. His success made Mary happy, and added positive gratitude to increasing predilection. So delicate had been his applications "to a mind diseased," that she trusted, as did the princess herself, he had not discovered her sufferings, nor suspected her of suspicion; but yet she felt that from him alone she had regained happiness in the point where it had been most shaken, and she spoke of him to Mary as the most amiable and generous of human beings.

The family of Menzikoff had now removed to Oranienbaum, that most magnificent of all the Russian palaces, and it was, of course, less easy to intrude at an early hour into the dressing-room, where the princess and her daughters breakfasted. But a young man on a good horse easily traverses fifteen versts, and Theodore's visits were likely to have continued very frequent, if Prince Bazilitch had not taken effectual steps to check the motions of his son.

Every branch of the Dolgourouki heard with scorn and anger of the attention paid by Theodore to Menzikoff's wife and daughter. High as the minister stood, immense as was his wealth, and unbounded as was his influence, to them he was only the enabled pastry-cook, whom fortune might depress with the same rapidity she had exalted, and to fortune and favour it was their pleasure to attribute his rise: if we except the good field-marshall, who always allowed his merits as a soldier. Hoping, therefore, some day to rejoice in his fall, nothing could be more distasteful to their views than the idea of their future representative stooping to a connexion with his daughter, although the personal merit of that fair girl, and her descent on her mother's side, scarcely could justify her rejection. It might be, indeed, said of the prince, as of a much more lowly parent:

"Long had he seen their mutual flame,
And seen it long unmoved,
But with a father's frown at last
He sternly disapproved."

It was, however, by no means his policy to assume a high tone on this occasion, important as it was, since a word from the empress, in favour of the minister's daughter, might have decided the matter despite of all the Dolgourouki, to say nothing of Theodore's independence. Happy were they, therefore, to learn that Persia had declared war, and Prince Bazilitch was appointed by the empress to conduct the ensuing

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campaign, and leave given to appoint his principal officers from his own family.

When this was communicated to Theodore, he was informed "that his own commission was made out, his necessaries provided, and it was desirable that in two hours he should depart with the first detachment of cavalry."

The surprise, the pain, fell on his heart like the stroke of an assassin, and he might be said to reel beneath the blow; but a short time sufficed to show him the true cause of his selection, and also the state of his own heart, which he now found to be irretrievably bound to Mary. He sought earnestly to rally his spirits, and summon to his aid the reason and resolution which ought to govern him in the eyes of others, whatever was its real influence.

"You speak not, Theodore, but, undoubtedly, you rejoice in the occasion given you for distinguishing yourself, though it has come upon you suddenly."

"I grieve, my dear father, that it has come at all, since I certainly shall not accept it. I have no desire for distinction; I prefer being a Russian nobleman, without farther title to carrying a Russian *bâton*, even if given me by the hand of Peter the Great."

"Degenerate boy! do you shrink from your duty to your sovereign? Do you mean to insult her by refusing her favours, and assist the reptiles who surround her in their enmity to your family?"

"I mean no insult to my sovereign, for I honour her virtues, and love her conduct. I will repair immediately to the Presence, and beseech her to transfer her honoured commission to my cousin Ivan, whose situation in life will render it valuable to him; for myself it is not needed; I have won my spurs, and have the means to maintain them."

"Is it possible," cried the prince, impetuously, "that a Dolgourouki should think a single act of courage sufficient for a life? How came it, miserable coward, that for once you dared to be brave? Whence came the fire that could animate you to a solitary proof of manhood? You are silent, sir—have I not a right to question you?—nay, more, a right to command you?"

"I was silent only because I feared trusting myself with an answer, under an accusation so galling as to be generally resented, even where resentment is a crime. I mean no disrespect towards you, sir; neither do I mean to show so much towards myself, as to relinquish a line of conduct which my venerable uncle himself has approved. He bade me avoid the paths of ambition—my principles and my taste declare against it. Why should I do that to which I am disinclined, in order to attain that which I cannot enjoy? Ivan, on the contrary, aspires to it; let him possess it."

"He shall possess more; it is well that my brother has a son, and that I have a nephew. While he is earning fame and fortune, pray how means your philosophical highness to employ your time? Will you raise *pâtes*, or cry them? I should say cry for them, for know, foolish, as recreant boy, the Prince of Ingria will never bestow any child of his on a Dolgourouki—he will not favour whom he fears!"

"I shall go to my property at Pozec, where I am greatly wanted—it is high time my serfs knew their master."

"Is this your final answer? Am I to under-

stand that you renounce the duties and privileges of a son?"

"I renounce neither; my life, my fortune, my affections, and cares are all devoted to my father, but I cannot enter as a *man* on a career my conscience disapproves, and such would be the course you point out. Once bound to the ear, I should never obtain my freedom; were I successful, you would urge me to pursue good fortune; if the contrary, my misfortunes would induce me to endeavour to retrieve them. I have earned my freedom, and I desire to enjoy it."

"You forget the empress—she may say something to your freedom!"*

"The empress may send me to Siberia, but she cannot send me to Persia. She may disgrace herself by banishing a faithful and useful subject, but she shall not disgrace me by imposing a task I decline. I am too true a son of the 'strong hand,' to be compelled to that I disapprove."

"You are right, Theodore," said the old field-marshall; "nevertheless, I marvel that you have the power to persist in your resolution: some additional motive must be influencing you besides preference for a tranquil life, for when did youth desire tranquillity, or despise glory?—but, perhaps, I had better not inquire too curiously; at all events, it is right you should go to Pozec."

Theodore was glad to retire, for his heart throbbed tumultuously, and he desired to control his emotions, and even to examine his desires in retirement. But why should he doubt the true cause of his late decision? Did not Mary fill every avenue of his heart!—was not her image ever present to his mind?—had not the dread of parting with her been the source of a resolution, which he ascribed to settled sentiments, and long-formed systems? Every fibre in his bosom answered "Yes!"

Yet Theodore had as much objection to being refused by Menzikoff, as the proudest of his family could desire; and, fully believing that his father had good reason for the words he had uttered, he determined not to risk his present happy position with Mary, by a declaration that might place him in the light of a dismissed lover; and his fears of every kind being awakened, he saw that it might be desirable that he should remove into the country, lest the empress should desire to bestow on him some bride, it would be painful to refuse, but impossible to accept. The very pride of Menzikoff would, as he thought, be the preservation of his daughter to him, since he knew that within his own short acquaintance two unexceptionable lovers had been dismissed without hesitation by the father, without reference to Mary's wishes, though evidently to her satisfaction. His high respect for the Princess Menzikoff, his sympathy with her feelings, and ardent desire for her felicity, made him determined to abide by her decision in all that related to the prince, her husband; but he could not persuade himself to renounce the presence of Mary till he had ascertained her sentiments respecting himself and his love. Scarcely could he doubt; for her integrity, not less than her open, ingenuous nature, had told him to hope, and she was incapable of deception or caprice; but who could deny himself the bliss of hearing he was beloved from such a girl as Mary?

* Theodore did not understand the laws of his country, which oblige every noble to serve at the will of the crown.

CHAPTER III.

Dark and troubled thought fell like a veil over the countenance of the princess, when the fond lover revealed to her his wishes and his fears, and with few omissions related the conversation which had taken place with his father. She had long read the state of these young hearts, which were an open page to the eye of experience and love; and, at one time, had feared evil consequences might arise from their attachment; but yet it had appeared to her so desirable a union in itself, so well calculated to consolidate power to all parties concerned, to heal all differences, and increase all solid benefits, that she could not bear to resign the hopes it had awakened.

Menzikoff's apparent inattention to the subject had led her to suppose he had no objection to a visitant whom he might be said tacitly to encourage, especially when successive suiters were dismissed; but she ought to have remembered that he had been, of late, incessantly engaged; that he had no idea of any one opposing his wishes, or even harbouring an inclination un-sanctioned by his permission. She had heard him repeatedly say he wished his son to resemble Theodore Dolgourouki; and since he had seen the handsome stranger frequently speaking to Alexander of subjects connected with his own travels or the youth's studies, apprehended that his approbation extended to desiring connexion of the strongest kind with one so amiable, although he was a Dolgourouki.

Seeing that the old leaven of hatred was not extinguished on one side, she now feared that it remained in full force on the other; and, dreading the consequences, now it was too late, she would have persuaded Theodore to bury his feelings in silence for the present; and in his retirement so to chasten his hopes and subdue his wishes, that he should conquer his passion, trusting that, by prudent management, she might effect the same consequence to her daughter, whose extreme youth and situation, as one surrounded by splendour and gayety, were likely to aid her wishes.

To this scheme the lover could not be brought to consent for a moment; he promised to be guided by her counsel for the future, but the present must throw him at the feet of Mary, to whom he devoted himself with the tenderness of a lover, and the zeal of a martyr; having a sense of being environed with difficulties, it would take many years and many sacrifices to remove, but which, he doubted not, would yield to energy and patience, to courage and endurance.

Mary, rejoicing yet trembling, in the full satisfaction of a confiding heart, and the modest dignity of a noble and gentle nature, blushingly confessed her love, and would have promised constancy till death, and even through eternity, had not the anxious mother checked her by appealing even to Theodore himself on the subject of a daughter's obedience. "Whoever," said she, "heard that a Russian noble's daughter resisted the will of her father, the commands of her sovereign? Should both be exerted (and, alas! there is a great probability both may), what would become of Mary?"

"Mother!" cried the gentle girl, clasping her hands, and raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, "mother! your Mary could die."

"No, Mary, you could not; neither by open

suicide, nor by slow, wasting grief, and determinate sorrow (the self-destruction of dastard spirits), could you, the well-instructed daughter of a Christian mother, dare to quit the field of duty; your religion is not that of forms and fasts, of gaudy vestments and idle ceremonies; it is that of the Bible, and the faith it teaches."

"That of the Lutheran Church, my own blessed faith!" cried Theodore, eagerly.

"Even so, my son," said the princess; "you undoubtedly gained it in Germany, its glorious cradle. I have been instructed by Brukenthal, a Lutheran minister, pious and enlightened—the friend, and often the reprobate, of my husband. If, indeed, you are of our church, Theodore, what is the command it lays upon your heart at this awful and eventful moment?"

"To give Mary, my beloved, my affianced Mary, the liberty of which I deprive myself, for she may be bound as I cannot be: like you, I declare, in case of the worst, it is her duty to suffer, but not die; and so entire is my faith in her love and her virtue, that I protest, before high Heaven, I can repose on her honour and affection, rejoice in the entirety of her love and the purity of her heart, even if (which may God in mercy forbid!) she is consigned, by her unrelenting father, to the arms of another."

"My father, my dear, dear father, is not of an unrelenting nature; he may be proud and exacting; he may compel obedience in trifling matters, but he will never break my heart, never force me to the falsity of perjury; and, dear Theodore, I will now swear—awful as it is—I will swear that—"

"Never, never will I hear you swear; for I know your heart, my Mary, as I share your faith; it is the most sacred, the most endearing bond between us; and, happily, our good empress secretly partakes it. The precepts of Gluck are still the ruling laws of her existence, though she shares in the forms of the national establishment. No, my beloved, I will burden you with no promise; for what end could it answer? Woman, in no country a free agent, in Russia is a fettered slave—bound by custom and riveted by law to implicit obedience, and forbidden even the asylum of a convent, until that period of life when the grave promises a surer."

As Theodore spoke his voice became husky, his cheek pallid, and tears were in his eyes: he appeared to labour, not only under the pain of parting, for the present, but with sad anticipations for the future; nevertheless, when he had arranged a plan of correspondence, both the young lovers grasped the pleasures it offered as a source of consolation, to which was also added to Theodore the power of visiting a mansion in the neighbourhood of his own, where the governess of Mary still resided, and her portrait adorned the walls; where she was remembered in every cottage, and might be talked of by every serf, circumstances of infinite importance to a lover so situated.

When Theodore had bade them adieu under these circumstances, both mother and daughter were too conscious of their interest in him to speak as they were wont of his casual visit to Menzikoff; and their first notice of his actual removal was given from the prince, observing, to his friend Count Sapicha:

"So it is really true that Prince Theodore is going to exhibit the rare character of a patriotic sovereign on a small scale, and has had the

courage to renounce the ambitious views of his family for him. He has actually set out for Poland, determined to improve his castle, cultivate his estates, educate his peasantry—some say eventually free them; it is a noble scheme, but the philosopher is very young. I have a notion he will spend more time at Moscow than Poland."

"To render this scheme effective for good purposes, he should have taken a wife with him. Women see farther into the politics of cottages than men; how much was effected by the princess when you were far away!"

Mary felt that she blushed to very pain as old Sapicha said this; but how was that confusion and distress increased, when she saw that her father's eyes were upon her, though he replied to the observation.

"Theodore is a romantic young man, of course; and, as a Dolgorouki, he must inevitably be a proud one; it may not be easy to reconcile sentiments opposing each other. With all his love of the country, and his pity for the poor, depend upon it, he will not give his title to a rustic beauty."

"That I grant, for he would require knowledge and taste in a wife, and could undoubtedly procure them. There is not a father in all the Russias—and you they throw Poland and Germany into the bargain—who would refuse his daughter to the young conqueror of Dagestan; at least, I know not one."

"But I do," said Menzikoff, dryly.

The princess, grieved for Mary, hastily taking her arm, left the room: when alone, they alike felt certain that their wishes were read, their secret penetrated, and that Menzikoff, though evidently free from personal objection, and apparently not moved by anger, would, from the pure desire of mortifying and insulting the Dolgorouki, refuse their relation as a son-in-law; and most sincerely did they alike hope that no such circumstance should take place to the offence and enmity of that powerful family, who, in their constant support of each other, had generally procured successful rivals, sooner or later, to all who opposed them.

That this spirit of union still subsisted, has been lately evinced by the honourable conduct of Ivan towards his cousin Theodore. When Prince Basitich found that his son persisted in refusing to accompany him, he not only declared Ivan his heir, but would have made certain legal dispositions of his property to that effect, if the young man had not, with great generosity of character, absolutely refused to accept them.

In doing this, Ivan proved "there is a soul of goodness in things evil;" for he was alike covetous of wealth and power, but he loved the noble boy who had reposed on him in infancy as an elder brother; and, by forbearing to mingle in the strife for honours, had bound him to his breast forever. Ivan could not believe that one so young and gifted could be otherwise than enterprising and ambitious. He believed that, in his affection for him, Theodore left the field open, in which he rejected the more, because he knew himself unscrupulous, cunning, and vindictive; whereas Theodore was none of these, therefore less likely to aggrandize his family, with whose present station he felt perfectly satisfied.

Mary was, at length, happy in receiving a letter from Theodore: what an epoch in the early

life of woman! Who among us does not remember every circumstance, almost every sensation, which belonged to that eventful boon—the first letter of the first beloved one? Mary, much as each revolving day increased her fears for the future, and told her their parting must be final, received this messenger of love with transport, and felt, for a time, as if it had given her present happiness and future promise. She read an account of Theodore's visit to Madame de Rocales; his delight in conversing with one who knew and loved her; the interest with which Roneburg inspired him, and his determination to examine every path where she had walked, every tree she had gazed at, and be good to all whom she had valued or pitied. As with glowing cheek and eager eye she pursued the lines his hand had formed, she became sensible to the thoughts which had actuated his bosom. While he thus addressed her, she felt as if they had been already irrevocably united, as if it were not in fate to divide two persons with one soul; and such appeared the actual state of herself and her lover.

When this dear missive had been submitted to her mother, this sense of union rather increased than diminished; for the words "poor creatures! they were formed for each other," passed the lips of the princess unconsciously; and, although she afterward deprecated the tone of fond flattery in which, she said, Theodore, like all young lovers, indulged, she could not eradicate the impression she had assisted in giving. "It may be long before we are united; perhaps we may never be married, but neither shall we ever be essentially parted; our union has taken place—it will be eternal."

Such was the language of poor Mary's heart, and she replied in the way such sentiments inspired. Free from guile, and conscious of innocence, she prattled with the freedom of girlhood, and the ability of matured observation; for every circumstance of her life, more especially that of her attachment, tended to the development of her character and her faculties. She learned to foresee difficulties, to combine probabilities, to penetrate character, and reason on circumstances; yet behold them under that silvery veil which innate benevolence throws over the actions of all.

Mary loved her father, though she feared him also, and knew that pride was his besetting sin; yet she held it to be his only fault, and felt sure that he was free from cruelty; therefore, could never be insensible to the happiness of his daughter; but to this view of Menzikoff Theodore could never agree, much as he was willing to accede to Mary's love of her father; and he candidly owned that he durst allow himself no hope of the future, so far as he was concerned.

"If," said he, "a change in his affairs should take place; if he lost the confidence of the empress, fell under suspicion as to the ministration of affairs, or the success of the war, he might be humbled, and listen to reason; but, so long as he is in prosperity and boundless power, he will be regardless of domestic happiness and filial tie, and would subject you to misery for the pleasure of trampling on me."

Mary could not believe this, but she had seen her mother weep too often for the exercise of his power over others, and negligence of herself, to be able to clear him from the charge of cruelty. She well knew that, although he was

capable of generosity and magnanimity, he was vindictive to fury, and capable of revenge for petty injury. Though he had gladly assisted the wishes of the empress in recalling many from banishment, who had been condemned by the ferocity of Peter, in his perverse moods, to that *living death*, he had also induced her to punish others in the same terrible manner, for having dared to ridicule his ostentation. She knew that her mother had frequently lamented the fate of Telskoi, of whose death she continually expected to hear, and for whom she had in vain besought recall; it was, therefore, but too probable that Theodore was right, and she might, one day, be sacrificed less to her father's ambition than to some baser passion; yet how these passions could be awakened she knew not.

As Mary thought on these things, day after day, her cheek grew pale, her lips were parched, tears frequently started to her eyes, and her health was evidently declining. New to these sensations, she believed herself to be verging to decline, and became impatient to see Theodore again, if but to bid him an eternal adieu; and, in one of those melting moods, to which all lovers are prone, she revealed her wishes and her fears.

Scarcely had the courier delivered this epistle, when Theodore was on his way to Petersburg, where he arrived with only a single attendant. As soon as it was possible, but, fearful of occasioning any increase of disorder to Mary, he contented himself with despatching news of his arrival to the princess, and entreating her to contrive for him a private interview. On that very evening, the prince dined with his family at Oranienbaum, and, when the servants had withdrawn, thus addressed his lady:

"I have remarked, for some time, that Mary has looked very poorly, but apprehended that anxiety for you was the sole occasion. I now begin to fear Oranienbaum does not suit her health, as being too near the sea, and I wish her to try the air of Roneburg."

For a moment her eyes sparkled with delight, for the name of Roneburg was dear to her; but the recollection of Theodore's present situation as instantly checked her, and she felt unable to speak; the princess, however, readily replied that, "in a week or two, if Mary was no better, it would be desirable to change the air."

"She shall go to-morrow morning early," was the reply; "I shall order her carriage and her attendants; Madame de Rocalee will soon restore her—she is a true friend and a skilful nurse."

"Mary is very valuable to me in my present situation, Alexander," said the princess, in a pleading voice—for the circumstance of her being at this time pregnant, after an interval of many years, had caused her husband to evince more of tenderness towards her than he had exhibited for a long time—he now, however, answered in a determined tone,

"There is the more occasion that she should go, as, perhaps, you may unintentionally be injurious to her; and Ulrica is of an age to be a companion, and supply her place to you. Mary must be taken care of; her health and her beauty are necessary to her father."

What the latter part of this mysterious speech implied was not known to his auditor; but they all knew that his will must be obeyed; and that which had lately been uneasiness in the breast of Mary now became wretchedness, since

it was impossible to inform Theodore of her removal, or mitigate the misery he was at this time experiencing. So short was the time given for her preparations, that she found it impossible to obtain even a *tete-a-tete* with that dear mother, whose fears were awakened more than ever for her health; because she thought the prince would not have shown so much anxiety, if Mary had not been worse than she apprehended.

Theodore, however, soon became apprized of her flight, and from a quarter which Menzikoff could not suspect. He had learned, from his great uncle, that, by the laws* of Russia, the sovereign could compel all noblemen to serve in the wars, and that his own had been an idle boast, when he said "the empress might send him to Siberia, but she should not send him to Persia." His long residence in a free country had made him lose sight of this and many other peculiarities in the situation of his native land; but, feeling due respect for her laws a duty, and, also, that his own situation was peculiar, in having adopted independence and disclaimed servility, he determined immediately to pay his respects to the empress, and trust to her former feelings of kindness towards him for procuring an audience.

Count Betschikeff was the only person in attendance on the empress, and he was in the confidence of Ivan Dolgouroukoff, and ever ready to forward the welfare of the family. Theodore was, therefore, received immediately, and welcomed so cordially, that, if error had been charged upon him, he could not doubt that it was forgiven; but it now struck him that the empress had never desired that he should accompany his father in any particular manner; which was, indeed, the case.

"I thought," said Catherine, with her usual benignant smile, "you would not stay long enough on your estate to do the good which the count here tells me you intended; like most other young men, you find plans much easier to make than to carry into effect. Is not your mansion near Roneburg, where Prince Menzikoff has a pretty place?"

"It is within a little distance; and the great good done by the princess during her times of occasional residence there, animates me with the desire of making my estate resemble Roneburg."

"I wish you success with all my heart. I think it is the very best thing you can do. Mary Menzikoff is on her way this very morning to that place for the benefit of the air. Have you then, indeed, the resolution to live in the country?—to build manufactorys?—to help my poor serfs?"

"With your majesty's permission, I hope soon to prove that I am capable of fulfilling my own intentions of contributing an individual's share to the benefit of the community; my business in the metropolis will not detain me long from my duties."

"Go when or where you may, Prince Theodore, you will have our good wishes; and should you be tempted again to travel for the beneficial purposes you pursue, you have no less our full permission. Count Betschikeff will see all necessary forms for this purpose complied with."

* In the reign of Catherine II. this law was abolished, as also that which compelled a nobleman to ask of his sovereign permission to travel.

It will be readily supposed that Theodore lost little time in retracing his footstep, and that Menzikoff, though, like monarchs, he had long arms and far-seeing eyes, had failed in securing his daughter from her anxious lover. That lover, the most ingenuous of human beings, at once flew after his beloved with the ardour of joy and the shams of self-reproach, for he felt conscious of having, to a certain degree, equivocated, and conveyed a false conception of his wishes and intentions. Love! impious love excused all, justified all; wherever its empire, its paramount though generous emotions may be felt and acted upon, yet self-will, on the whole, predominate.

If ever man had an excuse for thus pursuing that "course of love which never did run smooth," it was Theodore Dolgorouki; he was, to say the least, Mary Menzikoff's equal in rank and fortune, since there was in his station a permanency which could scarcely be allowed to hers. His private character was spotless, his personal qualities extraordinary; he enjoyed, like her, the favour of his sovereign, and he had already seen many admirers dismissed, which proved that the prince was in no hurry to marry his daughter, and was unconscious of her having any predilection. Reason could not justify the prince's refusal; and most men in high station affect to be ruled by her dictates, and, in proportion as their actions come before mankind, are jealous of their characters; but pride may rise to a point where it scorns all interference, and tramples on all opinion. No one was more likely than Menzikoff to affect this mode of resembling his great master.

All present sorrows and future fears were forgotten when, in the avenues surrounding Roneburg, Mary saw Theodore bounding towards her, and heard her own name pronounced in that tone of deep and thrilling delight peculiar to the lover's tongue. It appeared, indeed, as if health itself was in his gift, for soon was her eye re-lumined, her step elastic; her cheek glowed with the tints of the wild rose, and she could walk un-tired beside him, while the good governess panted far behind, or, seated on a garden-chair, was contented to keep her eye upon their devious movements, without joining in their conversation.

When the first congratulations on their meeting were past, and the fond fears of the lover reassured, Theodore related to Mary all that he had done and meant to do respecting his people, eager to obtain her approbation and her opinion also, since she knew more of the habits and the abilities of the people of the country than he could do after living so long with the Germans.

It may be supposed that Mary, who, as a child, had sat many an hour on the knee of Peter the Great, as he talked over affairs of the utmost importance with her father, neither frightened by the convulsive contortions of his countenance, nor wearied by his plaus and conjectures, though often distressed by his denunciations, could listen with great interest to the benevolent schemes with which his mind was filled, and recall for his guidance the conduct of her mother on many an important occasion, where forbearance and patience were necessary, in order to make charity capable of effecting its object. Every advice, every anecdote she related, proved not only the tenderness of her heart, the comprehensive beneficence of her desires,

but the soundness of her judgment, and its habitual exercise on subjects of importance and utility; and, despite of his prejudices, Theodore confessed that Menzikoff had given his daughter many a lesson that might be valuable in the life of a woman born to greatness.

CHAPTER IV.

It was happy for the Russian lovers that they were four hundred versts from St. Petersburg—that they were the only people of rank in the neighbourhood of each other; and, above all, that there were neither tall tale newspapers, mail-coaches, steamers, nor railways concerned with those. No elegantly-turned paragraph, with apparent charity and real malignity, informed the prime minister that "the short summer of Russia was every day smiling on his fair daughter and an unknown but gallant cavalier, and that every day found them more loth to part."

The time came, however, and, as it appeared, with rapid and ill-omened approach, when Mary was informed by a courier that she must return the beginning of the following week; for, as it had been faithfully told that "her health had recovered rapidly," in order to render her dear mother easy, both parents alike desired to see her before the approach of winter should subject her to delay, or injure her by cold. To wait until the winter set in, although, in fact, the best time for travelling, was in her case out of the question.

When Theodore heard this mandate, he appeared so struck by a petrifying sense of misery, that Mary was not only grieved but terrified, and she led him by the hand, as one paralyzed by age, to the alcove, where Madame de Rocales awaited them. Her tears recalled Theodore to himself; and he instantly began to speak, though for the first time, on a subject which had, in fact, occupied all his waking hours since his return to Pozeczk.

"Mary, permit me to say our love is mutual: your sense of it may be less ardent and overwhelming than that which agitates my breast, because your mother justly divides you with me, but it is as sincere, as tender, as my own. You can no more be happy without me (gratefully and proudly I thank you for this predilection), than I can cease to be miserable without you."

"I grant it, dear Theodore; but why enhance the pangs of parting by depicting that attachment, which is at once so dear and so afflictive!"

"That we may avoid the suffering before us—a suffering neither of us can sustain. For myself—it is madness and death but to think of it!—to you, it will be the return of every evil symptom. In short, we are doomed to the conduct we must pursue, which is, to fly hence—to be married at the first place where we take shelter—to live in happy obscurity until all differences have subsided between our fathers, and—"

"Theodore," said Mary, inburnfully, "this is not fulfilling your promise to my mother—it is not waiting till better times."

"For us there are no better times in prospect, and worse times daily menace us. I have letters as well as you; my friend tells me 'a reigning German prince is domiciled with the Prince of Ingria at Oranienbaum, and no one knew

his circuit to Russia.' Alas! I know it too well—he is about to give this petty monarch his daughter's hand; he sent you here to renew your health, that you might be strong to suffer; to increase your beauty, that you might be irresistible in your charms. Unhappy lamb! thou art fattened for the slaughter!"

Overpowered with the dreadful images awakened in his mind, poor Theodore flung himself on a seat, and hid his face with his hands, while Mary stood before him the image of despair. Madame de Rocales was dissolved in tears; she could only sob forth, "My children! my poor children!"

This grief, on her part, gave Mary the idea that she also had heard of this prince, and believed in the truth of Theodore's assertion from some positive information on the subject. Were she indeed about to be thus sacrificed, she felt determined to fly that very night, being assured that her mother would suffer less from her elopement, than from witnessing her marriage with a stranger whom she must eternally loathe, as the destroyer of her happiness. Yet, even in this case, a terrible repugnance arose in her mind to a scheme so wild and unadvised, and hastily turning to her governess, she exclaimed:

"Tell me, dear, dear madame, all you know, all you have heard respecting this hateful man, this German prince!"

"I have heard nothing, I knew nothing, save what you know also. I weep not on his account; but because of your sad situation in parting with this amiable prince; it brings back the sorrows of my youth."

"Enough! my father will not, shall not, sacrifice me to any man, and it is my duty to go to my mother."

"You know not of what he is capable, where ambition is his object," cried Theodore, starting to his feet; "every circumstance combines to favour the idea of his intending you for the wife of a sovereign; for this purpose he refused you to the son of his friend Count Saphira; a fact I know from the young count; who is my friend, and told me he had also refused the son of the Chancellor Rosamunki. He has educated you to assist the counsels of a sovereign."

"Would that he were content with a sovereign hand!" said Mary, musing.

"That hand he abhors; despite it he cannot," said Theodore, proudly; "and surely he must think a Prince of Dolgotrouki equal to a petty ruler in a narrow province."

"I doubt not that he does, Theodore; and I am certain he will not, at this time, compel me to anything that by wounding me might be injurious to my dear mother."

"He is not wot to be too careful of her, Mary."

"Then I am the more called upon for watchful tenderness. You know not her situation, Theodore; she is again likely to become a mother; she suffers much, and is subject to temporary loss of sight. Oh! how could I, even for a moment, think of leaving so good a mother at such a time as this!"

Theodore started, and became pale as ashes while Mary spoke; then, taking both her hands in his, he cried, with great emotion,

"Forgive me, dearest Mary! I see clearly you cannot, ought not to comply with my wishes. I love and honour your mother more than

words can express, and should never know peace again if I were the cause of injury to her; nor do I doubt that your father will indeed, at this time, listen to your pleadings. Prince Mensikoff is a man, not a monster."

"Oh! a good man, a great man—one who loves his children, and must love his angel-wife," cried madame; "think not hardly of him, Prince Theodore, for he has many virtues."

"Hardly! Madame de Rocales, you little know how I could love and honour him; if he would allow me. With what zeal I could follow out his patriotic views; with what goodwill oppose his enemies!—how gently I could seek to wean him from the ambition which will consume him, and lead him to permanent happiness, true friendship, and solid virtues!—why will he spurn me?"

"He does not do that; he has not refused you his daughter."

"Think you he would not do it!" cried Theodore, eagerly: "speak, dear lady; you know him well. Think you he would give me Mary? I would beg for her, even on my knees, if I might hope."

"I must not deceive you; I dare not encourage you. Be well informed as to his inclinations; you inflict such a wound on your own love and the pride of your family, as to receive a refusal from one you all have looked on with most blameable contempt."

"It is ever thus," said Theodore, after a long pause; "and, though I resign all claim on you now, dear Mary, I foresee there will be only one medium by which I can ever hope to be united. The present circumstances of your family are my consolation; but my patience shall not relax my vigilance in preparing for the future. Much as I love my people, and seek their happiness; decidedly as I prefer my native land to all others, for that it is my native land, the land that gave birth to my mother and you, my Mary; still I can fly with you to the ends of the earth, and shall place all my affairs in train for that purpose."

"I thank your love," said Mary, with a deep sigh; "and fair would I hope for better things than the dire necessity of flying my country, abjuring my situation, my father's house, and my fair fame: let not our last moments be darkened by anything so dreadful! My father's pride must not be humbled by his daughter's weakness; my mother's child should be an example to her sister."

Theodore would have soothed the weeping girl by exclaiming against all thought of such degradation, if any alternative remained, and by insisting that a mother who so well performed all the duties of a wife, and so justly appreciated the value of conjugal affection, would greatly prefer knowing her the wife of the man she loved, even in a state of exile, to witnessing her misery with another. To this Mary gave a full consent, and she owned likewise her power of braving all difficulties, and enduring even to be evil spoken of with Theodore, rather than wholly renouncing him, which seemed a thing altogether impossible. In proportion to the happiness she had lately enjoyed, was the misery she now experienced; and Theodore found himself obliged to abandon all claims, all complaints to the stricken and sinking girl, who believed herself, at this time, the most wretched and forlorn of human beings.

How often, in after life, did she look back upon the very sorrow of this parting scene with envy. The *beloved* are never the entirely miserable; to have a sure resting-place in one good heart is a cordial that will sustain us through many sufferings.

CHAPTER V.

The first day of Mary's journey homeward was consoled by the company of Madame de Rocales, after which she had no other companion than the maid who had accompanied her, and who, being ignorant of her cause for sorrow, offered a reason for concealing or restraining it. She was convinced, though no words had passed on the subject, that she was under the protection of Theodore; and that, like a guardian spirit, he hovered near her, to obviate all difficulties and secure her from all injuries; and this sense of his vicinity, at times, afforded her the sweetest reliance on his love, the most decided pleasure in his virtue, and approbation of his prudence; but there were others, in which an intolerable desire to see him once more, if but for an hour, a minute, to speak one word, to exchange one look only, was afflictive to her, and she felt willing to brave every danger to obtain this pleasure, transitory as it must be.

When she arrived within fifty versts of the metropolis, and every circumstance combined to render the remainder of her journey easy, a letter was put into her hands, at one of the post-houses, which had the appearance of a petition, but which she instantly knew to be the farewell of her invisible guardian. Though mournful, it was yet consolatory, not less than dear, and was a cordial to her heart for the rest of her journey, although the writer declared "that such was his sense of overwhelming sorrow, he thought it not improbable that in a short time he should set out for Germany, in order to divert his mind, and also to free them both from any suspicion the Prince Menzikoff might feel, or hereafter be inspired with; and he besought her to write to him under cover to Madame de Rocales, and give him her opinion and wishes on the subject."

On nearly reaching home, Mary once more felt that she was yet a daughter and a sister; and with feelings of mingled shame and sorrow, inwardly inveighed against herself, for having been so long and so completely absorbed by her love for Theodore, that she had comparatively forgotten the duty, the gratitude, and tenderness, due to a mother so excellent, and, hitherto, so inexpressibly dear. Anxiously and penitently did she lift up her heart to God, and pray that she might be enabled, by increased attention and self-control, to fulfil her own ideas of the care due to her mother, the submission and obedience her father had a right to exact, but she did not the less fondly cling to Theodore as the very life of her life, the source from whence all her happiness must spring.

It is unnecessary to say with what joy she was received by the princess, whom she found seated with her brother and sister only, for the German prince had departed before she had heard his name, and it now appeared that he was a young married man, neither likely to ask her for himself nor another, so that all appre-

bation on this account was speedily banished, and she trusted that, by this time, young Sevich was sufficiently informed to relieve the mind of Theodore.

When she first saw her father, Mary blushed excessively, and he received her with many encomiums on her appearance; but, as her colour declined, appeared dissatisfied, until the princess said "that she was convinced that the journey had been of essential use to her on the whole, though she now suffered from fatigue, and might be some days before she recovered the effects of travel."

"It is of consequence she should not only be well, but look well," was the father's reply, uttered not with the feelings of a parent so much as the solicitude of a diplomatist, negotiating some scheme of policy; and the alarm which had subsided again returned to disturb the placidity Mary was endeavouring to establish in her bosom, despite of those sweet memories which were now painfully regretted.

"Mary," said her mother, when they were alone, "you have been in company with Theodore; I read it in your blushing when addressing your father."

"Never, but when dear Madame Rocales was present."

"And you love him more than ever?"

"I confess it fully, my mother. Nay, I cannot be happy till I have told you that Theodore, hurried away by his fears for the future, and his belief that my father will dispense of my hand without regard for my inclinations, wished me to fly with him. Mother! look not at me so strangely—I am here at your feet."

"Whither could you have flown? what was his plan?"

"He wished my good governess to go with me to Poland, where he could meet us, and after our marriage proceed with me to the Tyrol, where we could dwell in security among a simple people, ignorant of our rank, and to whom the degree of wealth he could extract from his estates would be valuable. He planned a life of virtue and happiness for us, which you would have approved, and of which you might have been informed after a season."

"Virtue and happiness! words fascinating and false. There is no virtue, Mary, in following the dictates of a selfish passion, no happiness in abandoning the duties of life; and more especially would Theodore Dolgourouki have found reason to regret such a weakness, because he has a proper sense of his situation as a Russian noble and an accountable being. Alas! I grieve to think how much he had forgotten himself and his situation, when he thus thought of deserting his own duties, to say nothing of yours."

"Forgive him, dear mother--on my knees I beseech you to forgive him--you have said, and you have taught me to know, that every human being is weak and fallible; that all need a Redeemer for the past, and a Divine assistant for the present. If Theodore tempted your Mary (and that she felt herself tempted she humbly confesses and deplores), yet the moment, yes! the moment he knew your situation, he not only desisted from his suit, but declared it was my duty to consider you and you alone--nay, he resigned me willingly, saying, that for the present I was safe, as Prince Menzikoff would not press anything in his family which could possibly

grieves and annoy the princess, at such a time as this."

"Poor Theodore! would to God he were thy husband, my child, for never yet have I known that man not make a good one who had a high sense of the duties of a mother, and deep tenderness for the sufferings and anxieties attached to the situation. Dear Theodore, I thank you for restoring me my child, but it is certain I should have forgiven you, if—but no! it is far better, far wiser, that you should remain and struggle with your fate—both are young, and a long life is before you; the union that closes suffering is much more desirable than that which begins it."

The princess muttered rather than spoke these words to herself, but Mary caught enough of them to see that although her mother thought it right to speak against clandestine marriage, and probably saw much disgrace and misery in its probable issue, yet in her own secret soul she could have rejoiced in Mary's escape with one she loved and confided in like Theodore. Still it was evident they had done right to renounce the temptation lately offered, for any surprise might have been fatal to one so delicate; and neither love nor fortune, in after life, could have atoned to Mary for the agonizing recollections that must have attended any injury given to such a mother.

The true cause of the young princess's recall had been a desire that she should appear in the place of her mother, on the occasion of a solemn ceremony, which was intended to take place on the anniversary of Peter the Great's decease, in the ensuing January, at which time the Princess Menzikoff would be unable to attend, or be liable to feel more than a person so circumstanced ought to do. It was also thought, by Menzikoff, desirable that his daughter should be frequently with the empress, for he now knew that he had many enemies, though he could not specify them in those who surrounded her, and he had some of a higher grade, who were at this time openly blaming him, more especially the Duchess of Courland.

This great personage accused him of having disposed of certain estates in Lithuania, to which she laid claim, and had induced Count Devrier (who had married the sister of Menzikoff) to espouse her cause, and bring it before the Czarina in such a manner as to prejudice so simple and upright-minded a judge especially against him. As it was well known that Menzikoff hated Devrier (and only gave him his sister at the positive command of the late emperor), no doubt was entertained by many that a man who had often quailed before a relation that never forgave him would so represent the matter as to tell much against Menzikoff, and might go hard to rob him of much power and considerable wealth, since restitution would undoubtedly follow condemnation. Some prophesied that the day which mourned the death of the master would see the downfall of his favourite; that the empress was too just to admit of the escape of an eminent peculator, having herself been nearly a victim through the wiles of Mons,* who was beheaded for his crime,

and although it was not likely punishment should go to such an extent where a constant friend and most vigilant minister was the party, degradation (the death-warrant of the proud and the great) might be reckoned on.

Menzikoff knew perfectly well that he had never applied a single rood of these estates to his own benefit; but that, considering them the property of the country, he had used them either as rewards to meritorious valour, or caused them to be cultivated as the means of subsistence to resident serfs, who were unclaimed by any lord at the time. Of course the value of the land and the population was greatly increased, and the future owner of this portion must be indebted to the government for its improvement, whereas, this circumstance had been the very reason the eyes of desire had been thrown upon it, with an intention of rendering Menzikoff a personal debtor for the income it had produced during the years it had been unclaimed.

When the time arrived that the matter, in all its bearings, came before the empress, who exceedingly disliked all business, but could not, on this occasion, make Menzikoff a judge in his own cause, to the great surprise of Count Devrier, with the simplicity of good sense, she acceded to the claims of the duchess for the land, saying, "she must herself find an equivalent for those who might suffer from the removal;" and added, "the duchess should have the waste also, if she paid the expenses upon it. Great thanks were due to Prince Menzikoff for rendering a barren tract productive, let who might be the owner. As the money had gone out of her treasury to cultivate the lands of the duchess, so it must return thither, and enable her to help her own subjects."

It is said that "justice satisfies every one," and those who were not concerned saw clearly that the empress had done right, and that Menzikoff had only acted with his usual vigilance on behalf of his royal mistress in improving land which remained unclaimed so long as it was unproductive. No one (about court, at least) said anything respecting the starving families thus rescued from destruction (among whom artificers of great merit had arisen, by whom important manufactories had been introduced), an omission Mary thought so strange, and, in fact, unfair to her father, that she could not help noticing it to the empress when she was one day patriotically, rather than generously, hoping "that the duchess would never raise the money necessary for the purpose of reuniting this disputed slip of ground to the duchy of Courland.

"It would be strange anywhere else, I dare say, Mary," she replied, "but here it is quite natural, because they believe the serfs were created for their pleasure and emolument, and ought to live or die, pine or prosper, just as far, but no farther, than may suit their pleasure and convenience. I don't believe it ever entered their heads that God made them, much less that Christ died for them; and that they are to stand by their own sides for equal judgment

the gallows to which was nailed the head of Mons. The empress, without changing colour at this dreadful sight, exclaimed, "What a pity it is that there is so much corruption among courtiers!" After reading this, who can suppose that she could be herself confederate with the chancellor for nefarious purposes? She was only the tool of one who became a victim to his own vices.

* Mons confessed to corruption on being threatened with torture. He was beheaded; his sister, Madame Balke, received five strokes of the knout, and was banished to Siberia. On the day subsequent to the execution of the sentence, Peter conveyed Catherine in an open carriage under

at the great day. These are the very points I wish them so much to know, as I have told Czar Peter a thousand times. A dozen Theodore Dolgouroukis would do more good to Russia than the finest army and navy in the world: we want good laws and good men, more than everything besides."

To hear Theodore thus named was music to Mary's ears; and though she turned her head aside, fearful that her involuntary blushes might be seen, never had she felt so high an opinion of the empress's discernment before; and many a time, in after life, did she regret not having thrown herself at her feet, and besought her intercession with her father, but this, at the time, she had no power to do; to subdue the throbings of her heart, and seek to hide her heightened colour, seemed all of which she was capable.

About this time, as she had been much with the empress, who always spoke to her with confidence, and a reliance on her judgment, not often given to one so young, Menzikoff fully persuaded himself that she had been of great use to him, and not only preserved by her presence his memory and services in the eyes of the empress, but actually induced her to speak and act in the manner she had done. He was, of course, satisfied with the royal decision, and soon resumed his patronising smile and triumphant gait; but his exceeding anger and contempt against Count Devrier (who had adopted the cause of the duchess, merely from hatred to him, and in order to embarrass his ministerial politics) rendered him wretched, from the insatiate desire of vengeance.

So soon as he could give himself time for such a purpose, he sought to instil the same feelings into Mary, trusting that she could influence the empress in such a manner as would lead to the destruction of his enemy. For himself, it would appear too palpable an act of revenge to speak of at this time, and he had always found the empress not only loth to talk of Siberia, but jealous of his desire to send any one there—she was ever ready to recall, but never to sentence; and when the errors of any party were descanted on with a view to that end, she would lay her little, fat, white hand on Menzikoff's arm and say, "Don't talk so like Peter, my good friend—you men can never be offended, but punishment is the first thing—we will be patient; we will threaten and persuade, and mend people if we can. Siberia is an extreme case, which we cannot bear to think of—say no more on the subject."

Fearing a repetition of these sentiments, Menzikoff hoped that Mary's suggestion of punishment, as coming from a daughter jealous of her father's honour, and in herself benevolent and merciful, might be attended to; but, to his extreme mortification, she was as obtuse in her perception of his wishes, as, when explained, she became opposed to his execution of them; declaring that, if the empress was about to banish Count Devrier, she would fall at her feet and sue for his forgiveness. "Do you not remember, father?" said she, in great agitation, "that your only sister, the playmate of your infancy, the sharer of your mother's milk, is the count's wife? If she became so contrary to your wishes, it was with her own full consent. She is now the mother of his children, the friend of his advanced age; to separate them

would be death to both; and what would the world say, if Prince Menzikoff sent his own innocent and only sister to Siberia?"

"You do not feel as you ought to do for your injured and insulted father, girl—you prefer his enemies, and would protect them."

"No, dear father; I would, on the contrary, pursue every possible means for disproving their accusations; and, by clearing your character, prove their assertions are calumnies. All this has been done in the count's case, and to pursue it farther is unworthy, and will be worse than useless, as showing a revengeful spirit, rarely, if ever, found combined with true greatness."

"The greatest man Europe ever knew pursued it."

"He did, more the pity, and threw a cloud on many of his actions; but remember how frequently he practised a contrary quality, and was as magnanimous as became him."

"You are mighty wise for so young a legislator, and are certainly possessed of a longer memory than any Russian, though your years are fewer."

Menzikoff spoke these words very bitterly, but Mary had learned from her mother's example that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," and she answered gently and half playfully,

"I know only what you have told me, and it would ill become me to forget the words of my father, when he spoke of my sovereign—when he was a workman, as Michaeloff, he took by mistake the tools of another man, who, in his rage, struck him a blow; for which the master, who was alone privy to his rank, reproved the poor fellow severely, and would have punished him, but the emperor could not bear this injustice; he instantly acknowledged that he was in fault, and gave the man money to make up the quarrel. Did he not behave nobly to Renschid, the Swedish general? and what could be more generous than his conduct to the Swedish prisoners after the battle of Pultava? You saved their lives, dear father, which will ever be the brightest jewel in your coronet, and he rendered those lives happy. Oh! you have told me many, many proofs of his nature being generous, though his temper was at times terrific."

The mention of Pultava, to a certain degree, put Menzikoff by his purpose; he felt the value of an act of mercy, as regards the performer, and he suffered himself to be soothed, and, to some extent, acquiescent; but he was not pleased with Mary for the turn she had given to his feelings, since he was unconvinced, though subdued temporarily; he was content, however, for the present, to speak contemptuously of her, as of a sex incapable of reasoning as of governing, and said, in a very pointed manner, "You will make a pretty kind of wife to a sovereign prince, if he acts by your advice and never punishes, one half of his subjects will eat up the other, and finish by swallowing him."

As Menzikoff left the room, Mary said to her mother, who had entered while she had been speaking,

"What can my father mean? He has of late more than once talked several times of what I shall do, or ought to do, when I marry a sovereign. Surely none will take me, or desire to do so—may God forbid!"

"I trust none will, my dear, but I do believe that from your birth he desired it; for, about that time, much was told respecting a king of

England who was expatriated, and made a vain attempt to recover his crown ; on which your father said, ' If that child had been old enough, and he would have married her, he should have been seated on his throne safe enough, and my daughter have kept her place there, as far as it was distant.' I thought, at the moment, how happy it was my infant was so little ; but, to tell the truth, I do think, almost from that day to this, he has wished to see you on a throne. When we were in Germany, I felt continual fear lest he should make some contract with a margrave or an archduke, or any man who reigned ; but, whenever I ventured to inquire, the answer was given in a short, authoritative, and somewhat mysterious manner, ' I have higher views for my daughter.' What they were, and are, I cannot conceive—in Russia, no higher can arise than a Dolgourouki—from France there can be no hope, on account of the religion—Sweden is out of the question—Poland has a married sovereign, so has England—he must be looking to Germany, but certainly not to its head."

" No, the Pope (I thank him) will reject me ; what think you, mother, if I am made a present of to the Grand Turk, as the first Christian princess who ever lighted a pipe for the Brother of the Sun, and adorned the seraglio by the moon-face of a daughter of Russia, clad in the spoils of frozen deserts ? I wonder how many provinces my father would ask him to give for such a peerless maiden ! Poor man, he would find a dear bargain, for the bird would be mute in her golden cage."

" Have no fear on that head, Mary ; for, however great the slave-seller might be, he could never persuade the sultan to admit such a thin damsel as you to enter his ' garden of delights.' You must not hope for a two hundred and seventieth share of his royal affections. Besides, what is the use of your having talents of government if you were placed where they were not allowed to be exercised ? "

" There can be no such government, mother, on the face of the earth. No ! Woman, either in her early days as a wife, or her later as a mother, takes her place in Turkey as well as elsewhere. Indeed, from what I can learn, women are far more esteemed than with us, for they neither beat daughters nor wives. I have heard the Czar himself say they were polished gentlemen with whom he conversed at Pruth."

" They had more politeness than honesty, certainly, when they took his bribes instead of himself—but we are talking idly, my dear child, when I want to know the cause of your father's earnest address to you."

" Alas ! I chattered wildly that you might forget to inquire—he hates my Uncle Devrier, represents his late misconduct, and wishes the emperor to banish him to Siberia."

" I feared as much, and therefore questioned you—Mary, let no consideration, not even that ever on your heart, induce you to lend a hand to such a dreadful end. Count Devrier is a foolish and, in some things, a wicked man ; but he does not merit punishment like that, and his wife is our beloved relation, her children young and innocent. Your father was instrumental in sending Count Tolstoi to Siberia. What has that error not cost me ?—days of sorrow, and nights of sleepless anguish, which he also has

shared, ever since we heard of the victim's miserable death."

Mary willingly, warmly promised ; nevertheless, when she thought of the reward it was possible her father might offer, she felt how great a trial it might be, and inwardly resolved to look for strength to resist temptation from on high. This was spared her ; but, from day to day, certain hints respecting her future situation tended to alarm her, although her father, cold and distant in his manners, still affected to think that she had no honour for his person, no regard to his wishes, thereby giving her that pain which is felt most acutely by a generous and devoted daughter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE court of Russia was busy throughout all its grades in preparing for the celebration of that awful ceremony of which we spoke ; and Menzikoff, not more the conductor of an army or an embassy than the arranger of a procession and master of ceremonies at a ball, was engaged in daily consultation with the dignitaries of the Greek Church and the managers of the grand concert, now establishing for the first time in Russia. Knowing his daughter's taste, and that her reading necessarily went far beyond his own, he could not forbear to consult her on many points, wherein feeling and grandeur might be alike displayed ; and he became so satisfied with her recommendations, and not unfrequently delighted by her acuteness and tact, that he forgot even his cherished malignity in his present gratification ; and the palace of Oranienbaum became, of course, more comfortable than it had been since the time of the Duchess of Courland's appearance among the nobility of Russia.

Most unfortunately for our lovers, Princess Menzikoff had been forbidden to read or write by her physician, and, of course, there was no pretext for sending couriers to Podeck, the prince himself having undertaken to give Madame de Rocales all necessary information, through channels connected with public affairs. Mary had contrived, through Count Sapicha, to acquaint Theodore with this fact, and she, therefore, did not doubt that he would come to Petersburgh as soon as the winter had set in, since, even if he avoided Oranienbaum, he would be able to hear of her health and that of her mother, and see her, at least, in public. More she could not wish him to risk, being aware that the late triumph of her father would render him liable to assume that pride of manner and sternness of decision likely to part them as effectually as even her marriage with another might do ; to temporize was, therefore, to cherish that hope which, however deceitful, was present help and consolation. At all events, Theodore would surely appear at the Cathedral, as the representative of his family, seeing his father and cousin were far distant, and the good old prince, his great uncle, not equal to any exertion.

On the morning of the 28th January, 1726, every bell in St. Petersburgh tolled at intervals, as if for a funeral ; long lines of priests and people, clothed in black, alone traced the snow-clad streets ; the business and action of life seemed suspended ; and in the general stillness, only broken by mournful sounds, the human forms, gliding slowly onward to one or other of the churches and convents, appeared rather the spec-

tres which might be supposed to emanate from the grave as retainers in the court of the King of Terrors, than portions of a living population.

When these precursors had performed accustomed rites at different parts of the city, they all assembled at the Winter Palace, from whence, in a short time, issued a cavalcade mournfully magnificent, consisting of all the officers of the crown, the foreign ambassadors, boyars from far-distant provinces, and all the dignitaries of the Church. Mournful music was heard at intervals, resembling the sounds of lamenting voices, and forming a unison with the tolling bells, a species of funereal dirge almost appalling in its thrilling vibrations. Arrived at the Cathedral, the spacious edifice was found completely lined with draperies of black cloth, and dimly lighted, save at the altar, which blazed with effulgent lamps, placed in such a manner as to show a full length picture of the late emperor to great advantage. The empress, dressed in the deepest possible mourning, was supported on either side by her eldest daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, and Mary Menzikoff, who were of the same height, and nearly the same age, both very beautiful, and looking, in their mourning habiliments, like angels who had descended to witness earthly sorrows. The daughters of Ivan (the brother of Peter the Great) sat on a raised throne at a little distance, accompanied by his youngest daughter, but his grandson, the heir of the throne, stood immediately before the empress, and could be distinctly seen by all the audience, on whom he looked with less of childish curiosity than of sullen weariness.

All the ladies present wore crape veils, which enveloped their whole persons, but during the performance of mass, were so far thrown back as to display their faces, which were universally pale, and not unfrequently even ghastly, and the picture of the dead appeared more like life than the living. The requiem, now sung, combined the most melancholy and touching pathos, with that grave and martial music adapted to the celebration of a warrior's obsequies, and which, from time to time, burst on the astonished ear like the peans of victory, but was followed, ever and anon, with the sweet, full, piercing voice of a female, who sang "He is fallen! he is fallen! weep, daughters of Russia, weep! for your father is fallen!"

She who thus arrested, as it were, the song of triumph, and crushed the tones of exultation, was a young Roman lady of extraordinary beauty, tall in stature, and of commanding mien. Her long dark hair floated over her shoulders, and her white full arms were held up in the attitude of supplication, but as she spoke dropped down prostrated by sorrow. Every one who gazed on her, as the thrilling words poured from her lips, partook her emotion; women were dissolved in sorrow, which men for the moment shared; many a gallant veteran wept at the sounds which recalled to his memory the scenes of danger he had shared with his sovereign, and young men envied them the proud recollection.

Mary, deeply affected, weeping, trembling, and almost on the point of fainting, threw her veil farther from her, and, at the moment, caught the figure of Theodore, who was standing just below the picture of the Czar, supporting the aged field-marshall, the oldest officer of that great prince, and the father of his army. Never had manly beauty, as portrayed by youth and age, been more strikingly exhibited and contrasted; for at this moment the good old prince, affected beyond his power to endure with firmness, had

sunk into the arms of Theodore, and his white silvery locks floated on the black mantle of the arm that tenderly enfolded him.

Theodore appeared to Mary as a protecting angel; and all those points in his character which had won her to love, and led her to believe that it was virtue to admire and honour him, seemed as if embodied before her. She felt as if she had never seen him in a light so endearing; and, in her contemplation of his character and person, became utterly oblivious to everything around her, even to the proud part she sustained in the ceremonial, as friend of the empress, and the high-swelling grief which music had so lately awakened in her bosom.

No wonder that bosom beat beneath her veil with a pulsation most difficult to hide and impossible to control, for Theodore's eye detected her from the motion of her hand, and became lighted up by a sense of joyful surprise which obliterated every other emotion. It yet did not render him unmindful of the precious charge he supported; and though sensible that the prince would prevent him from joining Mary, even in the crowd, and exchanging one speaking look, no vexatious anger moved his temper towards an unoffending cause. He even increased his attention towards his venerable relation, but he could not take his eyes from Mary, seated thus close to the throne, and filling the same place with the royal daughters. "Surely," said he, "that proud man is now satisfied: having attained this situation for his daughter on so public an occasion, he will desire no more."

His eye was drawn to Menzikoff as he spoke: it was certain little satisfaction was visible in his countenance, for he was extremely pale, and his eyelids swollen and drooping. Of quick rather than lasting feelings, and peculiarly alive to the power of music, he had suffered emotions of sorrow far more deeply than any person in the congregation, not even excepting the empress; and, as even the high situation in which he now stood seemed to him the gift of the sovereign he bewailed, and on whose portrait he gazed, his gratitude overpowered him, and he could have thrown himself prostrate before it. Under his present oppressive sensations, he earnestly desired the means of retirement, and the empress, with considerate kindness, excused him from returning to the palace, and proposed that, on leaving the church, he should take Mary with him, and repair to the princess, who was at his palace in town.

Released from the trammels of ceremony, and leaning on her father's arm, Mary could not forbear to cast many a glance around in hopes of seeing Theodore, and she was so far fortunate as to perceive him enter a carriage with the field-marshall, a circumstance that closed all farther expectation for the present. When he was gone, she was again in the world around her, and became sensible to many whispers as to the withdrawal of her father from the procession, though the general conjecture seemed to be his evident illness, arising from recent agitation.

Mary looked at him earnestly; and while pained with his apparent suffering, she yet felt proud of his sensibility and gratitude, especially as contrasted with the conduct of many around them, who, wearied with the length of the service, or charmed with the singing of the beautiful actress, were freely, and often loudly, praising, or blaming, the whole performance. Compared to these, many of whom owed all they enjoyed to Peter I., how noble, how worthy, appeared her father in the fond eyes of Mary, who,

cheered by the sight of Theodore, had recovered her spirits and complacency!

As they approached the doors of the Cathedral, they observed two ladies, both of whom were tall and graceful figures, but closely wrapped in the general mourning veil; they had fixed themselves in a kind of recess, and seemed waiting to watch the court go by; just as they reached them, one stepped forward, and, putting out her hand, seized that of Menzikoff, which she pressed to her lips and her heart, saying, in a voice broken by sobs,

"Dear, dear prince! accept my thanks—my blessings. I know that to you—yes, to you alone—I owe my recall; for though the empress is kind, she is forgetful and inactive; but *you* remembered me."

"I am truly glad to see you, Madame Balke; but be careful how you speak—we are in a crowd. When did you arrive?"

"This very day; and here I have stood waiting to see and thank you. Be assured no one hears me; I have learned the value of prudence at a very effective school, though a very cruel one."

"Who is your companion?" said Menzikoff, in an apprehensive tone.

"An old friend," replied the lady, unveiling, and thereby revealing a face which, though no longer young, was singularly handsome. The prince shook hands with her heartily, but the empress and her *carriage* were now pouring to the door. The prince darted forward to secure his carriage, and, of course, they were separated; the ladies, also, hastening away in another direction.

"How delighted your mother will be to hear poor Madame Balke is returned!" said Menzikoff, in a tone so indicative of self-gratulation, that Mary saw at once the health of his mind was restored, and that this incident had effected for him all her heart had so lately panted to obtain; and she readily answered,

"She will be glad—all the world will be glad, dear father. Oh! how different a sensation must pervade the mind on recalling, or on banishing, an unhappy fellow-creature! Nothing on earth could be more delightful than receiving the heartfelt thanks Madame Balke has just tendered you. Dear father, I envy your sensations."

"They were delightful, certainly, but not more so, probably, than I should feel in sending Count Devrier to the—"

"Dear father, I cannot hear you say so; you wrong yourself in supposing it. It may be necessary, therefore right, to punish, but it never can be so to have pleasure in the infliction; to delight in torturing is not the error of a man, but the vice of a demon, and one that places the punisher far below the punished in the scale of humanity. Even as a child, I have loathed and abhorred the Czar as he talked of such things, and felt as if my little hands could grasp a dagger to destroy him."

"A very proper person to give a lesson of morality, truly! Yet my feelings were natural; one wicked passion awakens another. The ruler who steps beyond justice is a wizad who raises evil spirits; the wise and merciful, the exorcist who banishes and destroys them."

Mary's last words were scarcely spoken when they reached home, to the surprise and pleasure of the princess, who, on hearing the safe return of Madame Balke, burst into tears of joy, flung herself into the arms of her husband, and called him "the deliverer of the oppressed." His younger children, especially his son, seemed in-

spired with joy and pride in his father, listening afterward to his details of the late ceremony with the feelings natural to an intelligent boy in his thirteenth year. But he forbore farther questioning; when Mary said, "Pray, father, who was the handsome lady who accompanied Madame Balke?—you appeared to know her well."

"I have long known her; she is the wife of a brother officer, and the daughter of a respectable merchant, and has perhaps as little reason to love the memory of Peter the Great as Madame Balke herself; nevertheless, she showed in her case some of the magnanimity for which you, Mary, are fond of giving him credit. He fell in love with her when a girl, and would, I doubt not, have married her, though she concluded that his views were dishonourable, from the prodigious difference in their rank. She also disliked and feared him, and had got in her head the foolish idea of *love* being necessary for happiness."

"And is it not, papa?" cried Ulrica. "I thought it was one's duty to love one's husband; and I have often wondered how some women could love theirs."

Menzikoff laughed heartily at this *naïve* question, but answered with an impressive air, "It is, my dear girl, a duty in every woman to love her husband after she is married, but by no means necessary to do it before. Well! this poor girl was not of this opinion; and from her fear, or dislike, of the greatest monarch alive, she actually left her father's house, one moonlight night, and set out to walk a distance of almost two hundred versts, and actually accomplished it, generally walking in the night-time, and hiding herself in some hut during the day. She at length reached the dwelling of her nurse's family, on the skirts of a forest; and, giving them her purse, entreated from them protection and safety. The poor people were kind, but they feared being brought into trouble if she were found with them; so the good man knocked her up a shed in the wood, placed in it a very humble bed, and every night the nurse or her daughter (who was, of course, her foster sister) went to sleep with her, and take her necessary food."

"How long could she possibly remain?" was the question of all.

"She stayed there for a whole year, and, during that time, was lamented as dead by her family, who, in the first place, experienced the anger of the emperor, as he thought they had concealed her purposely; when he was convinced of the sincerity of their grief, and found that her clothes were all left (for she had taken only a change of linen), he pitied them, and concluded, as they did, that she was murdered; and during the time of her absence, being our frequent visitant, became attached to the empress, whom he eventually married."

"But when was the lady discovered, papa? and by whom?"

"She was discovered, my dear, by a sagacious and hungry greyhound, who scented her victuals, and drew his master (who was hunting) to her hut. On opening the door of this secluded dwelling, he saw a pretty young woman, in the habit of a serf, who instantly fell on her knees, and besought him not to reveal the existence of her habitation, whom, on his questioning, he found to be the lady whose disappearance had excited so much sorrow. When he told her that the emperor had found one to whom his heart was devoted, he obtained her permission to inform her parents of her safety, and lost no time

in revealing the wonderful news. The father immediately repaired to the palace, saw the emperor, who was sitting with her whom he now and forever preferred, and who listened to his story with great satisfaction. 'Poor thing! she has suffered much,' said he; 'tell me, Catherine, what I ought to do with her now?'

"Give the young captain who found her a dowry with her, worthy of yourself; most probably she will love the man who acted so delicately and feelingly towards her."

"The emperor took this advice, was present at the wedding, and gave the bride away, saying, 'Take her and cherish her, for she is truly virtuous.' Since then her husband has got rapidly forward; she has a fine family, and is, I believe, a happy woman."

"But how much greater she might have been!" said Ulrica; "how often she must reflect on her folly!"

Menzikoff fixed his eyes on his younger daughter with a long and scrutinizing gaze; at length he said, "You would like to marry an emperor, Ulrica? Perhaps you would like to reign yourself?"

"Oh yes! papa; I should like it, indeed! I think of it every day."

"And pray, my little queenly lady, how would you employ yourself?"

"I would have concerts every morning, and balls every evening. In the summer I would have reviews, and in the winter plenty of sledging and ice-hills of the most elegant construction. My millinery should come from France, my dresses from Genoa, my furs from Siberia, my cambric from Holland, my diamonds from—"

"Spare me more of your wardrobe," said Menzikoff, shaking his head, "for I find you just the sovereign I suspected; nevertheless, you would look the character well, and that is something."

"Something! everything, papa, when one is young, and has ministers to do the business, as you do."

"I have a notion Mary will give us a somewhat different account of her time in such a case. Elizabeth of England, Isabella of Castile, Christina of Sweden, found reigning a different thing to dancing; they had *duties* to perform, and they did perform them."

"Pardon me, papa; the last found duties burdensome, so she resigned them and her crown together. I should not do so strange a thing, because I would not do anything so disagreeable as to disgust me with a high and glorious station."

All laughed at Ulrica, for cheerfulness was the order of the evening, and, for the first time for many years, they had no company (the solemnity having rendered it etiquette to be alone), yet Menzikoff wanted none. His heart had received a salutary excitement in Madame Balke's address, which had at once soothed its agitations and preserved its sensibilities, opening to it a source of pleasure in domestic intercourse and the contemplation of his lovely family—a source of pleasure he too seldom allowed himself to feel, deeming it necessary to appear an austere father, expecting implicit obedience, in order that he might find them ready to follow the path his ambition or interest might dictate. In his own mind he had often condemned the character of Peter the Great's conduct towards his son, because he knew the young man to be weak and easily misled, and concluded that kindness would have drawn him as much as

severity detached him; but, knowing that his own children had excellent natural abilities, which were improved by education, he concluded that, without constantly assuming the despot, he could not hold them in check; and, since his power was universally acknowledged without his mansion, it ought certainly to be observed within. Notwithstanding the laws thus prescribed to himself, his original feeling would in some unguarded and delicious moments break forth, despite of the pride which disfigured, and the cares which oppressed him; and this enjoyment he at present permitted to himself, by which the princess, for the time, was happy as the happiest.

"Was my father always thus," thought Mary, "he could not fail to love Theodore, from the congeniality of their natures; and he would, in a short time, rejoice in a connexion which realized all he could desire in talent to aid his designs, and that honour and integrity necessary to true greatness." As she thus suffered her thoughts to wander, imagination placed her beloved in a chair near her mother, whose hand he held, listening delightedly to her father, who related past events of interest, or detailed plans of utility calculated to assist the poor and foster the meritorious. Mary could forget herself, her hopes and wishes, in the contemplation of benevolence or the activity of charity and pity, not less than love, which, when aided by fancy, gave her many a lovely vision, in which her father and Theodore appeared born to act together for their own happiness and the advantage of mankind. She fondly looked into the face of her mother, and saw, or thought she saw, that Theodore was the object of her ruminations also; and the sweet complacency of her features led Mary to believe that their visions of the future resembled each other.

Alas! alas! they were indeed only the illusions of love—the unbased hopes which continually charm and delude the young—yet, who can say it would be wisdom to refuse their benignant influence, and thus rob existence of its shortest-lived, yet frequently its sweetest pleasures?

CHAPTER VII.

Nor thus had the day closed in peace to Theodore Dolgourouki, who, having seen his venerable kinsman safe home, returned into the crowd, in the hope that some happy chance might enable him to approach Mary—perhaps speak to her, or at least touch her garments in passing. She had looked (shrouded as he had seen her) so pale and death-like, he had no doubt whatever that her father had removed with her before the empress, expressly on account of her health. "Ah! when," said he, "shall I be the protector to whom she must look for assistance in the hour of weakness? when shall I listen to her dear requests, and fly to obey them? How different would be the fond solicitude of love to the cold compliance with necessity, yielded by the stately Menzikoff!"

Everywhere the tall form and courteous bearing of Theodore procured him the power of piercing the crowd; but never did he catch a view of the lofty head and dark tresses of Menzikoff, much less obtain a glance of the slight form of his daughter. In vain he traversed in every direction, pressed towards every carriage, and anathematized that universal similarity of

dress, which had led him to innumerable false conclusions: he returned to the house of the Field-marshal, baffled and disappointed, to ruminate on all possible evil, utterly unfit for society, yet incapable of bearing solitude.

He found two officers, who had waited on Prince Baziltsch to know if he had any commands for his nephew or Count Ivan, as they were about to set forward with a re-enforcement for the army, now in winter-quarters. They apologized for giving so short a notice of their intention, but said it arose from the circumstance of Prince Menzikoff having found, the night before, that the ground was in the precise state for travelling, on which he had given immediate notice to every individual concerned; had arranged all the *matériel*, paid the necessary moneys into proper hands, forwarded supplies, or the persons necessary to procure them, through the whole route, such persons being now eighteen hours in advance; and therefore it would not become them, by any delay, to retard intentions of great importance to the general in command, and, of course, to his success.

"And this man," said the field-marshal, "has been the very spirit, the commanding genius of this solemn day; nay, more—I firmly believe that, like myself, he felt as he ought. He honoured the mighty dead; he felt, in the very depths of his heart, the gratitude due to the hand which raised him and placed him on high, not only for his own sake, but that of the people, among whom he dwelt, and for whom he laboured. Yes! our long-headed minister, our diplomatic warrior, our arranger of solemn observances, and gorgeous feasts, has this day felt as a man and a subject, even though burdened with the many cares, as a minister, he had so well discharged."

"Please your highness," said the officer, timidly, "he ought to feel kindly every day, for surely he is the happiest of fathers! I was close beside him as he led out the young princess, who appeared, in my eyes, a kind of veiled angel; and her voice seemed sweeter than all the music, as she said, 'Oh! how happy it will make dear mamma to see us return to her, instead of going to the palace!'"

Theodore, harassed as his spirits had been, looked up to the speaker with a smile, and, in a very cordial manner, desired him to present his duty to his father immediately on his arrival at the camp. The officer took his leave, much impressed with the urbanity of the speaker, who, so soon as the door was closed on him, relapsed into that air of melancholy his eulogium on Mary had momentarily interrupted. He was not one of those young men who think an aged relative of little importance, and leave him to his own painful reflections or observations unnoticed; this the good old officer well knew, and truly sympathizing with one he loved so affectionately, after a short space, in which Theodore vainly tried to rally, he thus addressed him:

"You have been struck to-day with the solemnity we have witnessed, my dear Theodore; more especially, probably, with the emotion evinced by gray-headed warriors like myself; beyond this your feelings could not be touched, since you can have little personal recollection of the emperor, and even that little would not be favourable. I, therefore, impute your present suffering to the recollection of your father, who is more especially brought before your mind's eye by the visit of young Chichikoff. I cannot be surprised at your uneasiness, for your affec-

tions are ardent, and must naturally rest on your only parent; though, I confess, he has never been to you all he ought since you lost your mother. Your independence, as to money matters, awoke his jealousy. Russian fathers (perhaps all fathers) desire to retain their sons in bondage."

"If my father desired from me only the obedience of reverence and affection, dear uncle, most gladly would I devote my time and my estate to his service; but the very circumstance of my being his son, and born to represent the Dolgourouki, compels me to act decidedly. That path of ambition which he prescribes to me as ensuring greatness, I deem too narrow for any noble spirit to walk in by choice; therefore I will not tread in it, since God has given me the means of refusing it. It may be Ivan's policy, perhaps his duty, to sacrifice his best days to the duties of the battle-field, and render his fine talents subservient to gaining a purpose or a place; he and many others may be compelled to yoke themselves to that state-carriage, which to-day draws a benefactor, to-morrow a tyrant; now scatters plenty, now spreads destruction; but to which, when once harnessed, he must continue attached, distributing the evil he loathes, and, finally, sinking under the obloquy he has only half merited."

"Generally speaking, my own views are much the same with yours, and I consider your intentions excellent; but, so strangely are we constituted, so impossible is it that we should stand alone, or act alone, that I must own your scheme for future life appears more calculated for virtue than happiness—for the good of others than yourself: and, dear Theodore, you cannot wonder that I desire to see you in that state of felicity you deserve. If your heart pines after your father, and the glory he is seeking, I would have you join him, after all; anything rather than see you, my brave boy, thus bowed down by causeless sorrow."

The tender tones in which the good old prince accosted him, the mistake under which he evidently laboured, and the natural ingenuousness of Theodore's nature, combined to melt his heart, and enable him at once to throw its every feeling and desire open to the views of the venerable man. He had heard him speak highly of Menzikoff, and observed a smile of calm approbation sit on his countenance when Mary's eulogium was pronounced: and he now poured into the ears of fourscore the fond encomiums, the treasured griefs, of a lover at three-and-twenty. Forgetting alike the prejudices of his age, the pride of his family, the utter improbability that his fears or his devotion could be properly estimated, or even comprehended, by the hoary listener, he eagerly related, not only every incident which had occurred between Mary and himself since the hour when he first beheld her, but every emotion of his heart arising from her looks and words. The sluices of his soul were opened; his eloquence was overpowering; and it fell not on the frozen earth, or the sandy desert. They are only read in one portion of human nature, who think that age destroys the sensibility or impairs the philanthropy of a good and pious heart: there is many a glowing affection beneath a snowy brow, and the energy of kindness may be read in a wrinkled mien.

Of course, the fears of Theodore were mingled with his confessions, and he touched upon the character of Menzikoff with less of complacency than his aged relative had done before him, protesting, at the same time, that the father of

Mary had a right to expect for her the highest destiny. Prince Bazilich thought no higher could be expected for any daughter of Eve than the beloved youth before him; but he did not the less conclude that Menzikoff would refuse him, if only to revenge the perpetual aspersions with which every other member of their family, save themselves, had for years cast on his conduct and his person; and, in reply, he drew so vivid a picture of the probable consequences to Mary of Theodore's offer of his hand, that the young man started up, and declared a resolution "to set out directly for the army, and adventure freely a life no longer worth preserving for himself, but which should never be rendered the medium of misfortune to Mary."

"Fy, fy, Theodore! your impetuosity will cause her more suffering than her father's disposal of her hand to another. Do not break the heart of her you desire to bless. Know I trust you will marry her; and since the whole world must see the justice of your claims, Menzikoff will accede to forgiveness, though he would deny consent."

"Forgiveness! then you would have me persuade Mary to fly with me to another country?"

"I see no other way, though it seems strange advice at fourscore, and Mary would say it was that of a dotard; but, indeed, Theodore, it is the result of close observation, made by a man who, unblessed by marriage ties, and feeling in himself the power to enjoy them, has been accustomed to mark the effect of such ties on others, while he mourned the want of them himself. Men in Russia, generally speaking, marry the woman whose beauty, for the present, they prefer; but, having little refinement, and no idea of the worth of woman's heart, they seldom, after marriage, take the trouble to win it, and very rarely is it theirs at the time when the law has given them the person, because the father is the only individual with whom the affair is arranged. Women, therefore, of sweet disposition and high intellect, who deserve to fill the happiest stations in society, may be seen, on every side, suffering from a thralldom destructive to their happiness, and frequently to their morals. I would avert from the sweet girl whom you love this fate, for which it is evident her father decrees her. You would, in time, get the better of your early disappointment, but—"

"Oh, no, dear sir! I never should. I have loved only Mary, and I can love no other."

"You believe so, undoubtedly, and I grant you will never love another so well; but do not persuade yourself to insist on this point, for it is an error, as my history might prove; but to this I shall not refer you, for it is impossible to persuade any young man that an old ruin like me ever resembled himself, either in person or passion; let that pass. You must not go to the army now, for the war halts in a manner somewhat embarrassing. If victory followed your appearance, as at Dagestan, your father, though a brave and skilful general, would be reflected on. If the present dilemma continued, the whole race of Dolgourouki would be condemned as incompetent."

"What then shall I do? Remain in Petersburg, meet Mary at court, and only there, where every glance might be observed, every word repeated; where the very beatings of a heart so full as mine might be counted?"

"No, Theodore; this is placing yourself on the wheel, and giving every fool the power to stretch you. Take my advice. The empress has given you leave to travel; you have left your

estate in good hands; why not spend a few months with your friends in Germany? by which means curious eyes and idle talkers will be diverted from you and your affairs; and, above all things, Menzikoff, saved from suspicion, will be in no hurry to dispose of a daughter so young as Mary. Time is everything, in your case; gain that, and you gain all it may bring. Believe me, the impatience of youth is as much its error as the caution of age."

"That is true, sir; and, could I see my reward, I could wait with Jacob's perseverance; but when a look, a line, is invaluable, how can I renounce them?"

"Pshaw! be not a boy; forego the shadow, and you may gain the substance. I will watch Mary for your sake—grow young, and attend balls and breakfasts. I can dictate my letters in French, which my secretary does not understand, but makes a shift to write; the labour of deciphering his spelling will do you good. Anything is better than the inertness of despair, or the fever of anxiety. I must have you better, dear Theodore, indeed I must. But I will say no more now; I must go to bed."

"To bed! dear, noble, generous old man! Long may the hour be averted which will make thy bed in the dust! And thou wilt watch, nay, wilt court my Mary for me! Into whose hands can I commit her with so much safety as thine! for how often has she spoken of thee with affection. Well, then, it shall be so. I will go, and Menzikoff shall know that I am gone. Poor Mary! surely this is hard on her."

The field-marshal had vanished before Theodore began thus to soliloquize, and it was found that the various excitements of the day had been so prejudicial to him, that several days followed in which Theodore would not leave him; but his retirement enabled him to arrange every circumstance connected with his future journey, which was generally spoken of as one of duration. Count Sapieha, observing how pale and abstracted his young friend appeared, urged him to set out, fully believing it was necessary for his health, and undertaking to break the matter to Mary, which he could not do for the present, as she was in close attendance on her mother, whose confinement was expected in the following month.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Princess Menzikoff, constantly subject to that anxiety which deranges the health of even the strongest, in due time gave her husband another daughter; but this proved so terrible a trial to her strength, that she was left for many weeks in a state of imminent, though not immediate danger. All the daughter was at this time so completely awakened in Mary's bosom, that the sorrow she had suffered, under the idea of Theodore's removal to a distant country, was in a manner forgotten; and, great as her comfort would have been in receiving from him those dear, invaluable letters, which might have soothed her inquietude, she yet had a consolation in knowing that all her energies and her solicitude were directed to one object and one end; and she fondly hoped her mother would be granted to her prayers, firmly believing that, but for the renunciation of each other, alike practised by herself and Theodore, her fragile tenure on life must have given way at this eventful period.

But to her cares for her mother's health were

soon added fears for her father's welfare, and sufferings from his temper. He had ventured to remain at home the first ten days of his wife's confinement, considering himself to be more than ever confirmed in the good graces of his sovereign, and believing that even his most virulent enemies would take his part, and comment on the wisdom of the empress in her late decision, by that means becoming eulogists of the man she defended. What, then, was his surprise and mortification, to find Count Devrier actually in the palace, and to learn from the attendants that he had been there very frequently during his absence!

The truth was, that Countess Devrier loved her husband and her brother also. She had no other relation, save Menzikoff, in the world, and she was the mother of two fine boys, whom he might raise to distinction or endow with fortune; and she sought, by every possible medium, to effect a reconciliation between two persons so necessary to her happiness and the welfare of her family. She thought the present a good time for her purpose (though many would have been of a contrary opinion). "My husband," said she, "has had it in his power to alarm the prince; therefore, he will perceive that such an enemy may be valuable when converted into a friend; and, as he has not therefore actually injured him, no bar remains to prevent their union."

The empress's motto on all occasions was "peace and good-will," and she yielded to these pleaded reasons because she loved the speaker, and remembered the time when Peter the Great had favoured the suit of her husband. When, therefore, Menzikoff was announced, she prepared to enter on her task of conciliation with all the kindness of her nature, but with less penetration than she frequently displayed.

Contempt, bitter, unmitigated contempt, was the passion called into action by this overture, and which even the presence of his sovereign was not able to control. "What!" said he; "can Count Devrier, who has, for year after year, never failed to deride my counsels and thwart my measures, and who has crowned a long course of injury by a base accusation, does he condescend to ally himself with the man he sought to ruin! or is this a new *ruse*, to effect by stratagem that which more open wickedness could not perform! Your majesty must pardon me if I decline farther acquaintance with one it is my misfortune to know already too well."

"I had hoped, Prince Menzikoff, your sister might have prevailed, even if your sovereign—" "

"Pardon me, madam, there is only one woman living to whom I owe allegiance, and I trust she will not doom her servant to the society of unpunished felons. Will your majesty permit me to retire? my wife is yet a sufferer."

"Pray go; I grieve for her sickness sincerely. I am ill myself—no one knows how ill."

With his blood still boiling in his veins, and every moment threatening to overleap all forms, long as he had been in that habit of self-control which is the virtue of courts, Menzikoff answered with little sympathy and less ceremony, and left the Presence in a rude and hasty manner. In his present mood, every eye he met wore a glance of defiance or of pity: one seemed to regard him with looks of covert malignity, another with ill-concealed exultation or palpable contempt. The passions raging in his own heart he concluded to be actuating those of others, and directed as much against himself as he was against Devrier. He hesitated as to whether he

should return home or not, being assured that, in his present state of perturbation, he could not be the companion of his wife's solitude: and yet, who else could sooth his sorrows and mollify his resentment?

"I can tell Mary what has happened. I can prepare her for what is to follow," passed through his mind, and "home" was the word to his attendants.

Mary was extremely sorry to perceive her father suffering from contending passions, and became horror-struck when the labouring tempest that shook him poured forth, like a volcano, in words of burning hatred on all whom he had seen at the palace, not excepting the empress, whom he termed "ungrateful and imbecile—a red that every knave might play upon—a worthless woman—"

"Stay, stay, dear father! your anger must not make you unjust to our dear kind friend, the empress, who may have been wrong, perhaps very wrong, in seeking to bring you and my uncle—I mean Count Devrier—together; but she meant it for the best, undoubtedly. Do not let her mistake make your misery. She often says 'Forget and Forgive,' and was trying to make you act upon her maxim towards him. If that is impossible, at least show it towards herself; for you are certain she meant well, as she always does."

"You talk like a child; you know nothing of courts nor their rulers—those gilded puppets, moved by hidden strings, which the most worthless can draw when they are acquainted with the humours of their royal automatons. Let Count Devrier become domiciled at Peterhof, and my ruin—ay, utter and irretrievable ruin—will follow as a thing of course—*malgré* all I have done for the country and Catherine. Nay, there are more surprising things than that I should be banished to Siberia; and then, perhaps, even you, in spite of your romantic taste for mercy, may think which of the two it had been better to preserve—your father, or the husband of your whimpering aunt."

Mary had seen enough of her father's temper to know it were well it should have vent in his own house and on his own daughter (however unoffending), therefore she was willing to endure the torrent, though desirous to turn it aside, if possible. As she did not think it in the slightest degree probable that the empress could ever forsake her father, and the allusion to his sister instantly communicated the idea that Countess Devrier had been the sole cause of restoring her husband to the good opinion of the empress, she answered, with a kind of playful gravity,

"Dear papa, your daughter is not quite so romantic as to fancy anything so utterly improbable can arise as your projected journey. Our sex are proverbial for fickleness, but it is quite beyond my faith in changes to expect Peter the Great's widow will send his favourite and her own best friend to Tobolsk, especially within a month of her proclaiming his integrity to the world, and taking upon herself the expenses attending what might be termed his mistake. I will not believe, however bounded the judgment of woman may be, that she will prefer the man she has openly termed 'malignant in his designs, and frivolous in his arguments,' to him whom she has owned for her best friend, as maid, wife, and widow."

"Then why admit the serpent to wind through the halls, and bask in her presence?"

"Because she has the power of forgiveness, and thought you had it."

"She is mistaken; whom I hate I avoid seeing—for I would forget both them and their errors if I could; but I have no notion of succumbing to old saws any more than to canting priests. Had you done your duty—had you seconded my wishes while the empress was justly angry at this man, by influencing her mind, he would have been removed before this time far enough. I should neither have seen him rear his crest to insult me, nor have dreaded the venom which at this very moment is poisoning my reputation, perhaps endangering my life. Think you it was for nothing I sent the Dolgourouki so far from me?"

The "quick and eloquent blood" of Mary rushed to her cheek; her powers of speech were arrested, and she could only say, in a low voice, "The Dolgourouki?"

"Yes; the proud, the ancient, the ambitious Dolgourouki, the 'lords of the sovereign hand!' Did I not send Bazilich and Ivan to Persia—not merely because I know they foil my measures, but that I felt they would be a blight to my eyes? The elder is a slave to forms, and will only fight as his father fought before him; so the war went to sleep comfortably in his hands, till the year went by which placed the empress on the throne. I have now sent re-enforcements which will rouse it. Ivan I was very glad to get rid of in the same way, for he has the prejudices of his family and not their principles: he is wily, patient, and persevering—perfect Jesuit in his heart, and a French courtier in his manners; handsome enough, and aspiring enough, to seek a royal bride; but he will find himself checked if he looks to Elizabeth—the 'strong hand' will not seize that golden apple, I can assure him."

Mary at once hoped and feared her father would pounce on Theodore; but, being utterly unable to pronounce his name, she could only say, "I know nothing of his father."

"I know only that he would send me the bow-string to-morrow if he could. The old prince is an honest man, of noble sentiments and most virtuous conduct. Dolgourouki, as he is, I honour him; and the young Theodore, notwithstanding his German notions of retirement and philosophy, is a very worthy fellow—by-the-way, he has set off again to ramble, which is as well, for I wish not to be his enemy, and could not be his friend, of course."

Mary faltered out, "Why not, dear father?"

"What a question! Does he not belong to the brood I hate, and who hate me? Did he not pay you somewhat of those attentions girls are often misled by (and which I could not, at that juncture, repel, being overwhelmed with negotiations), and then fly off to his mother's estate, to build factories and civilize serfs? 'Twas well he did, for I want no farther quarrel with the magnates of that mighty house—my daughter's destination is fixed."

The last words were spoken in a tone which completely silenced Mary; at the same time, they convinced her that many which he had uttered indicative (as she thought at the time) of suspicion respecting Theodore, had been without any meaning but that which her own conscience had assigned them. For the present, she rejoiced that her father, though moody and anxious, had talked away his rage, and, therefore, her mother was likely to escape an infliction which must have been injurious to her at a time when perfect tranquillity was necessary to her restoration.

Though Mary had affected to think lightly of the enmity of Count Devrier, because she trem-

bled at her father's rage in the first place, and was grieved by his forebodings afterward, yet, during the whole of the ensuing night, she pressed a sleepless pillow, fearing that his temper had been so far exhibited as to have given his enemies an advantage over him that might be turned to account. Though she shrank with horror from the punishment her father would have drawn on Devrier, yet he was a man she both disliked and dreaded, and knew that for so many years he had openly avowed enmity against her father, it was little likely his late concession could have arisen from penitence for the past, or pure intention for the future. If he meant evil, might she not avert it? The empress was evidently attached to her, and the Princess Elizabeth, her daughter, loved her, as girls at their season often love, with unbounded confidence and warm affection.

The following morning she, therefore, proposed waiting on the empress, which her mother was glad to learn, as she thought she had been confined too closely with her; and her father approved, for he had occasion to see the empress on business, which had been blameably postponed the previous day. "I will take you to the palace," said he, "and then go forward to the chancellor's; and I trust you will find means for me to see the empress, without encountering that basilisk, who yesterday made me play the fool very blameably. Should you find the empress angry with me, Mary, perhaps you can soothe her, but if she insists on my receiving Devrier, desire her to give me an audience in private, and I will then give her such reasons—at all events, I will not see or submit to receive that man—no! not for—for—"

"Not for the sake of me and of your children, dear Menzikoff?" said the princess, lifting her pale cheek from the pillow as he was standing near her couch.

"No!" cried Menzikoff, in a voice of thunder, which made both Mary and her mother start in horror; but he quickly added,

"Why will you ask a question which compels such answer? As I love, so I hate—*impetuously, constantly*. As I never forget a benefit, so do I remember an injury, and he has given me a legion."

Mary kissed her mother, and set out full of solicitude, and almost wondering how her father had so long retained his power in the palace, and sensible that, after all, his footing must be precarious. As he remained silent during their drive, which was not a long one (as they were for the present resident in St. Petersburg), it was evident that he was correcting his temper, and assuming the habitual complacency of his countenance; and Mary could not help thinking how much wiser and happier the path in life which Theodore had chosen must be than that in which her father had so long trodden; and, "very likely," she added, "it will be, eventually, more useful." The bow that has been compelled to bend may, in a moment, break its bond, and revert to its old position; but the progress of improvement, gradually given in kindness, enlightens the mind while it employs the hands, and enriches the cottage, and man increases in intelligence as he grows in stature, without even knowing how he received the impetus which gave him importance and utility."

Poor Mary's reflections (which never failed to introduce Theodore) were cut short by her arrival at the palace, where she was not sorry, in the first place, to be received by the Princess Elizabeth, as she doubted not that she should

soon learn from her how her father really stood in the eyes of the empress. The royal young lady, however, had her own sorrows to relate in the first place; and they were of so serious a nature, that it was not likely she could think of court intrigues or ministerial quarrels, for her beloved and amiable mother was the object of her extreme solicitude.

"You know," said she, "the empress has long been unwell, and the increase in her size portends sickness that may be fatal; nay, the physicians declare it must be so, unless she entirely alters her mode of living, which we cannot persuade her to do. They wish her to live on animal food, plainly cooked, whereas she will touch nothing but confectionary and sweet-meats; they prescribe a small quantity of cordial wine, and she drinks a great deal of Tokay, because it is sweet, and she is consequently thirsty. When the summer is come in, we fear she will again sleep out of doors, as she did last year, because the emperor was not here to make her do right. I wish, with all my heart, *your* father could make her take proper care of herself, as *my* father did."

"My dear princess, he has no right to urge the empress; indeed, I fear much he gave her offence yesterday."

"No, he did not; but your uncle did! for, after the prince was gone, he said so many wicked things, that the Czarina was more angry than I ever knew her, for she commanded him to quit her presence, and await her commands in his own house. When he was gone, she said he had proved himself a wretch, and Menzikoff was quite right to have nothing to say to him; therefore, I do hope, now, while he is more than commonly in favour, he will press upon her due care for her health. You, dear Mary, must do the same—for what would either you or I do without our dear, *dear* mothers?"

The empress now entered the room where the two fair young creatures, thus early introduced to the cares of life, were seated; and, after kind inquiries respecting Princess Menzikoff had been made, and a regular detail of her own symptoms given, the empress added,

"Your mother's confinement has been a great loss to me, in so far as it kept your father at home, and I have, in consequence, been teased by all kinds of people to talk about business, which they know I hate; but the worst of all was your aunt, Countess Devrier. She came crying—and I cannot bear to see tears, you know—so I acceded to her request, and tried to make things up with your father. Well, child! he went off very angry, just as he used to do with your mother, only he did remember who he was speaking to—he *did* remember that."

"I am exceedingly sorry. I beseech your majesty, indeed—indeed—I beg, most humbly, your majesty's pardon," said Mary, clasping her hands, and bending in a supplicating posture before the empress.

"Don't say a word about it, Mary," said the good-natured queen; "I did not mind it at all. I know what men are, and what airs the best of them show off now and then. I've seen him worse, years ago, when your mother was as beautiful as an angel, and as good, too, for anything I know, so I thought nothing of it—'twas gone out of my mind the next minute; but your uncle wanted to take advantage of it—he wanted me to turn away, nay, even to ruin, my friend and minister. He is a wicked man, and must think me a fool to listen to him. You must not blame me if I ordered him to keep his house,

and sent a couple of guardmen to see he did it."

Mary, greatly relieved, tried to speak of her father's gratitude, and the sorrow he had felt the preceding evening in the sense of error.

"Yes, yes! I knew he'd be sorry; but the wickedness of one man had made me forget the weakness of the other. I dare say he would be angry at that word if he heard it. No matter! 'tis a proper word; pets are weaknesses, but, I fear, all men are subject to them; 'tis a lucky country that is governed by a *woman*, for, though she may have faults, they are never such great ones as men's are. She neither goes to war for pleasure, as men do, nor spends large sums for mere nonsense, nor forgets the sufferings of the poor, nor ventures to think God made men for her to oppress, and so on. No, no, women make good sovereigns!"

"May my dear country prove the truth of your majesty's assertion for many a year!" said Mary, devoutly and ardently.

"Thank you, my good child," said the empress, tenderly kissing her cheek; "at all events, I will try to live; and you may tell your dear parents that I mean to benefit my health by becoming their visiter, for at least a fortnight, at Oranienbaum, whither they will go, of course, as soon as your mother can remove. In the course of the time, I shall be godmother to your little sister, who must be called Catherine. As there is plenty of room at Oranienbaum, I shall bring my daughter and the archduke, who, I trust, will improve much with so well-educated a boy as your brother; indeed, I wish him, also, to be well acquainted with *you*."

As Menzikoff, in the first place, received all this good news from his daughter, he conceived that she had shown extraordinary abilities in so managing the temper of the empress as to gain what he held to be a triumph in the eyes of all the nobility, as well as a complete reproof to the man who had so lately been a false accuser, and now a subtle designer, against him; but even of Devrier he now thought little—the glory that awaited him in the visit of the empress obliterated even his plans and wishes for vengeance.

From this time, the health of the princess was watched most anxiously, not only from a natural desire for her relief and that of the empress, whose health grew constantly worse, but in order that the display intended might be properly considered and provided for. The first breath of summer had an immediate and happy effect on the invalid, who became extremely desirous to obey the wishes of her husband, and removed before she ought to have done to the palace of Oranienbaum, under the idea that she should gain strength from the salubrity of the air, while she could also listen to her happy consort's plans, or assist his intentions by her advice.

Artificers of every description were now employed in decorating the gardens by temporary erections, required for various purposes. Delicacies for the table of every description, and in great abundance, were sought in every direction; and food, of a more substantial character, brought forward in such quantities, that the palace resembled a castle preparing for a siege, and the neighbourhood said that Prince Menzikoff had mistaken the Oranienbaum, meant for his pleasure in summer, for the Oranienburgh,* which he expected to maintain him the year round. Musicians were sent for to a great distance, and engaged at enormous expense, to add to the pleasure

* Catherine permitted him to build the town of Oranienburgh, and tax the inhabitants.—See "Hanway's Travels."

care of the entertainment, for every Russian has an ear for music; and Peter himself had earnestly desired to render this charming art as refined as it was general among his subjects. Menzikoff knew that friends and enemies, reformers and opposers, the old *Hetman* and the new noble, would alike be charmed by the concord of sweet sounds, and the warblings of those sirens who bewitch the world as much in the cold regions of the north as the sunny realms of their native Italy.

As the empress had expressed a wish to arrive at *Oranienbaum* at least three days before the grand *site*, in order that she might see the preparations made for it, Princess Menzikoff declared her intention of remaining in seclusion until her arrival, a determination the prince much approved, observing "that she could see his various contrivances, and judge of the effects to be produced, in company with the empress; and, meantime, Mary and Ulrica would be found to him very good substitutes for their delicate mother."

Scarcely had the words been spoken, and the busy speaker departed, when a minister of religion was announced; and, as such guests were always held sacred in the eyes of the princess, she immediately began to recall her words, and observe, "that such a visitor could not possibly be injurious to her."

Mary thought otherwise, but the servant had already taken the assent of the princess to the admission of the stranger to her boudoir; great was her surprise when, on the entrance of the minister, her mother, starting from the sofa, exclaimed joyfully,

"Ah! dear Brukenthal, is it possible I am so happy as to see you? My children, behold your father's earliest friend—I may say too, certainly his best, and, I trust, his dearest friend;" then, turning again to the clergyman, she said, "Welcome! welcome, dear Brukenthal, once more! how very long it is since we have seen you!"

"True, dear madam," replied the venerable man; "twelve years have passed over us both since we met last, and our path in life has necessarily been very different; the poor Lutheran pastor of a simple country congregation has nothing in common with the ruler of a mighty people. Nevertheless, there are certain memories and affections which will always bind me to the prince, though I cannot expect such recollections and feelings obtain such influence with him. For this I blame him not; his time and his thoughts are unavoidably claimed by the great and pressing business of his life."

"Not entirely, my friend, for he remembers you often; and has told all his children (save this babe) of the kind and wise young friend who, although only three years older than himself, taught him the value of knowledge, and so prepared him for his future acquisitions—"

"This, then," cried Mary, joyously, "is the good *Feorowitc*, who saved up pennies to buy writing materials, and taught my father accounts by figures made on wooden pegs. Oh, how delighted, dear sir, he will be to see you!"

"That is not quite so certain, fair girl; so far as he remembers me, his thoughts towards me are as much those of anger as love. At the time of his own elevation, he named me as his friend to the emperor, who gave me a place in his army, and promoted me beyond my merits; but, on learning my love for books and a quiet life, kindly gave me an appointment about court, for which my taste and my principles rendered me unfit, so that I held it but as a

splendid bondage. During a journey to the Ukraine, a severe illness made me an object of pastoral attention to a pious Lutheran clergyman, who taught me the Christianity which is of the heart. I adopted his creed, resigned my situation, and have been many years the pastor of an humble people, who love me, and to whom I am of service. With them I am happy, despite of poverty and seclusion; but, as there are many in the world whom I yet honour and love, I have taken a schoolboy's holiday to visit them. Should your father have forgotten me—"

Menzikoff entered as the word forgotten was uttered by the lips of his friend, in a voice once so familiar and so dear; he stepped hastily towards the tall, thin, pale man, whose high brow and intellectual countenance had already struck his children with veneration, and exclaimed, "Ah! is it you, Brukenthal? are you once more come to see me?" and threw himself upon his bosom.

The contrast between the former friends was, at this moment, striking; for the prince, full in his person, singularly handsome, and most gorgeously appalled, flushed with the consciousness of his fortunes, and looking forward to a position beyond them, showed his proud acquisitions in his features and his gait; while Brukenthal, habituated to the meek bearing of a parish priest, humbled from principle, yet graceful from nature, and dignified from military command in early life, in his black and almost threadbare garments, conveyed the idea of one as much reduced as his companion was exalted, and became singularly interesting to the discriminating eye. Yet his countenance was serene, his brow unwrinkled, and his gentle smile was as manly as it was benevolent.

"You must believe that I rejoice to see you, though I grieve, and am indeed mortified by your present situation, being so far below your merits," said the prince. "Had you continued in the national church, the highest honours she bestows had been yours long since; 'tis true the empress loves and favours the Lutherans, but yet you are in a state of poverty."

"Very true! such poverty as your menials would think appalling."

Menzikoff felt a pang of reproach pass through his heart—the friend of his childhood ought not to have known the pressure of penury.

Brukenthal hastened to relieve the pain which overshadowed the countenance of Menzikoff, and which rose, probably, from mingled feelings of anger towards both himself and the priest. "I adopted," said he, "my religion from sincere conviction of its value, and I have never repented, for I have been independent and happy. Nay, more—I enjoy *power* (that great object of all men's envy when they reach my age)—yes! I live among an honest, faithful people, who revere me and venerate my words. But, surely, the man has no need to apologize for his situation in life who is devoted to the highest, as well as holiest, of all services—the ambassador of the King of kings.

"But, dear Menzikoff, let us talk of yourself; you have attained so high an eminence, have concentrated such a variety of places, are endowed with so many acquisitions, that really I tremble—"

Menzikoff drew the hand of his friend through his arm, and proceeded to his own boudoir, saying, "that his princess was in much too weak a state to listen to any *tirade* beginning with so awful a word as *tremble*;" and he added, "you

were not wont to be so pusillanimous; but I consider *fear* as the badge of your profession."

"You have termed me rash, many a time, Alexander."

"Yes! on the field of battle, where I have seen you brave death a thousand times, and where you twice saved me, almost by miracle, at the risk of your own life; but we are both older since then. However, tell me now why you tremble."

"Lest the very height at which you are arrived should—"

"Pshaw! you prophesied the same thing when I saw you last, yet here I am!—yes, *here* I am, where never minister was before, in the palace of the Czars and its possessors. The fact is, I was born for camps and courts; to govern is my vocation. What thought you of my métropolis, as you came through it, remembering, as you do, when it was a dirty swamp?"

"I thought you had done wonders, and deserved immortal fame for your exertions, but I am still of opinion that it costs more than it is worth, and that a city founded (as Peter himself thought once) on the site of the fishing suburb of Novogorod—"

"No man has dared for years to speak of that scheme in my presence; the daily growth of Petersburgh proves its folly; the present metropolis looks down on all Europe as on its future dominions."

"And by the same rule, my choice would have not only looked, but led, to Asia, which is the largest quarter of the globe, I ween; to say nothing of its wealth and its greater congeniality of habits and—"

"What care I for its wealth or its extent? It is only among *men* that a man of my description desires to excel; the effeminate hordes of distant Asia, or even its nearer and more worthy barbarians, are not the people I should choose to dazzle, or desire to subjugate. The ancient and warlike, the accomplished and learned, must constitute the subjects of my future—I mean my sovereign's future empire."

"You do well to remember her, prince; they tell me she is ill, and that was the circumstance chiefly on my mind when I was about to say I trembled for your highness."

"Call me Menzikoff, dear Brukenthal, as you were wont, but do not tease me with predictions of evil; as the minister of a religion which is the enemy of superstition, one would expect you to be superior to the saws and dreams of vulgar minds. If the prediction held good, that all who rise must fall, there could not be a successive dynasty in the world, yet we see them both at home and abroad. Such nonsense is unworthy of either of us. Come and look at my improvements."

The prince led the way into the gardens of his palace, and became, in a few minutes, so utterly absorbed in the business before him, that Brukenthal saw at once this was no time in which to impress on his mind the instability of human greatness, or the peculiarities of Russian politics. Long secluded from the area in which his friend was moving, and sensible himself of the effect of years in restraining the enthusiasm, or taming the desires, of man, he saw, with surprise, not unmixed with admiration, the faculties, still possessed in perfection by Menzikoff, of keeping cool in the midst of confusion; of giving to the important or the trifling claims of the moment the attention precisely their due, and, by a just discrimination, preserving, in the minds of all around him, a sense of being prop-

erly received and justly appreciated. Sincerely as the good pastor had long desired that his friend should quit the high place he occupied in the government of his country, and by descending, secure peace to the evening of his life, he yet could not forbear to think, that if ever man was born to the station he filled, Menzikoff was that man.

Leaving the minister to the objects of his multitudinous anxieties, which included the welfare of millions and the disposition of flower-beds, Brukenthal attached himself to the society of the princess and her children, especially that of Alexander. Mary was useful to her father, and, of course, her presence much in demand; but so much was she pleased with all she saw and heard of the revered and amiable pastor, that she earnestly entreated her mother to place before him the story of her attachment to Theodore, in the hope that, sanctioned by his approbation, it might be at length placed, as it ought to have been from the first, under the eye of her father.

That father had been now, for some days, so especially kind to herself, so attentive to her mother, and considerate to all around him, she could not help believing that the friendship of his early days, thus happily renewed, had softened and humbled his heart, rendering it pious to all the sweetest affections, and, therefore, likely to yield in some degree to her wishes, as well as to the reasons which Brukenthal might with propriety adduce on behalf of Theodore.

Neither mother nor daughter had formed any idea of the warmth with which a man, usually so calm and scrutinizing as Brukenthal, entered into his mission, of which he confidently spoke as certain to be successful. It appeared that the village where he resided was at no great distance from Pozeck, and that the fame of Prince Theodore's good deeds had spread through every cottage in the place, many of which had been indirectly benefited by his charity, or the instructions he had tried to disseminate with so much liberality. The very name of one so young and highly connected, thus devoting himself to the most patriotic pursuits, had become music to the ear of our recluse, and his most trivial actions had, for many months, become of interest in his eyes, and nothing less than a thorough knowledge of Menzikoff's former dislike of all the Dolgoroukii could have prevented him speaking much of one whom he so entirely approved and honoured.

It will be readily believed how completely these sentiments won on the good-will of Mary, whom the good pastor, in his turn, liked considerably the more, from the merit of having inspired Theodore with affection. Ambition in early life, and devotion in his latter days, had prevented Brukenthal from becoming himself enthralled by a passion which might have added a little to his personal happiness, but would have so evidently impeded his usefulness, that he had had the wisdom to check it in its bud, thereby leaving an overflowing fund of kindness in his bosom for all who needed it, in the holy exercise of which he received the consolation he imparted; he was trusted as a friend, loved as a father, venerated as a teacher.

Perhaps it is difficult for any human being to live long in the exercise of even the gentlest form of power without becoming subject to making a false estimate of it. Brukenthal, at least, did so; he had been accustomed to mollify stubborn fathers, or remonstrate with froward chil-

dren, and thought himself capable of effecting much because he had already been often successful; but he forgot the great difference of the parties in question, and how entirely the arguments which demand attention in simple communities are disregarded among the great and the diplomatical.

Knowing the time of the empress's expected arrival, and having consented to stay one day afterward, at the earnest request of the princess, Brukenthal delayed to open his negotiation until nearly the time of his departure. This plan, he thought, was the more desirable, because the prince would have got nearly through his preparations for the royal guests, and he would have also increased his own intimacy with the wishes and expectations of a father who looked so high, but he also resolved not to lose any favourable opportunity which might occur when they were alone together. Mary, with terrible solicitude, the result of alternate hope and fear (the fever and ague of the soul), bore with great difficulty the intervening time, sometimes mistrusting the powers of the mediator, at others assured of his success, but never failing to feel "the full force of an honest heartache."

CHAPTER IX.

THE fortunate hour at length arrived. Menzikoff found time to rest himself for an hour in his library, and to appear glad to see Brukenthal already seated there.

"I am sorry you cannot stay to see my babe christened," said he; "my friend, it will be an imposing spectacle, I can assure you."

"And one of great interest to me, though I enjoy it frequently; of course, I mean that of receiving a young child into the Church of Christ. Such a ceremony as that to be witnessed here, I never have seen, or am likely to see. Be assured, I shall remember your babe in my prayers, and its weak mother also."

"I am sure you will, my dear friend; and I trust you will never be so long again absent from us. Occasions like this may occur, when you will rejoice in our joy, and offer us congratulations in person. What do you say, Brukenthal?"

"Perhaps, if your daughters were to marry men whom I approved, my cynicism, as you term it, might so far give way, as that I should once more visit Petersburgh."

"I fear my girls would not approve *your* taste, my friend."

"I am persuaded, that if left to themselves, they *would* approve my taste, for I am told the young men I select are as handsome as they are highborn and accomplished. I choose one because I know, from his actions, he is good; and the other simply because he is *his* friend, and must, as such, be virtuous and well-informed."

"I have no idea how you became acquainted with such men in regions so far out of the world; pray, who may your paragons be?"

"The sons of Prince Lubitsch Dolgourouki and Count Sapicha."

"I give you credit for most excellent choice; and the fact is, that I should be glad if the latter would wait a year or two for Ulrica, as I should prefer him to any other Russian; but I have reasons for thinking Germany will eventually provide her a husband. As to Mary, her fortune is decided, and will be great beyond her hopes; for the present, neither herself nor her mother is aware of it."

"Then you will give her to Theodore Dolgourouki, whom she already loves, and who is worthy of her, where she—"

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing; her love and his worth have nothing to do with my designs, which I have brooded on ever since I saw you last. Read these papers from the court of Vienna; this note received not an hour ago from the empress; every line will show you that my plans are inevitably arranged, not only for Mary, who is marriageable, but Alexander, who is yet a boy. *She* will be informed soon of the glorious destiny that awaits her, but I intend *his* education to be completed before I dazzle his mind with the honours he is one day to enjoy."

"Are their affections never to be consulted? Must their happiness be the sacrifice of your ambition?"

"Brukenthal, I am a Russian father; I love my children, I have laboured hard for their aggrandizement. I expect, in return, their obedience. What would you more? *I will be obeyed!*"

Brukenthal laid his hands on various papers, which he read, one after another, with great care; and before he had finished the first that were given him, others were handed forward by Menzikoff. Every one tended to show that, for a long course of years, the ambitious, plotting favourite of Peter had been labouring to a certain end, for which purpose he had been conciliating distant courts, compromising various interests, subsidizing some, and threatening others, so as to render his pleas irresistible with the empress, who was thus taught to believe that, as he had placed her on the throne, he alone could keep her there; and she had, within a very short space, and after long consideration, at length acceded to his wishes, and agreed to a twofold union of his children in her family.

Every line that the good pastor read (and he read them all over and over) confirmed him in the utter hopelessness of the case, and the delusive dream which had so lately possessed his mind, and showed, in the long vista of successive years, two young, lovely, and virtuous beings, diffusing unnumbered blessings to countless multitudes, faded before him; and, pushing away the hated but irrevocable documents, he suffered his head to fall upon his hands in all the stupor of sorrow and bitter disappointment.

Menzikoff considered the sorrow of his friend indirect reproach to himself; and, after taking two or three turns in the library, he drew near to him, and said, in a low voice, and with a deprecating air,

"You will say, why did I allow Mary to go to court, to see men there who might take the fancy of a young maiden, and cause her future uneasiness? I answer, that I did put off the evil day until the empress would permit it no longer; and that, from a stroke of ill-fortune I could not foresee, this Theodore you speak of was, for the first time, present; they had both sense enough to see that each was superior to all which surrounded them, but the young man soon after retired to the estate where you say he is adored; and Mary, by remaining, has probably forgotten him. That mournful shake of your head says I am mistaken—"

"Let it say more: that she never will forget him—never *can*; you have yourself given the reason why neither should forget the other—they each saw in the other a superior being."

"In youth all impressions are evanescent, unless supported by hope. Theodore has given up any he might once have entertained, and has wisely withdrawn. Mary must do so, and I

should be glad if you would tell her so; but I am forbidden by the empress to tell her more; therefore, I dare not."

"You *dare not*; it cannot be Menzikoff who dares not to do that which he surely ought to do."

"I have spoken only the truth, Brukenthal, in saying I *dare not*; the empress is not only a kind and benevolent, but a good-natured woman; nevertheless, she is an invader, and, as such, subject to caprice and fretfulness. She is now in the second year of her sovereignty, and has become sensible of its stability; and if my enemies should gain a knowledge of my design, it might be overthrown, after all it has cost me. Within a few weeks Count Devries sought my ruin by a bold *manoeuvre* with the Duchess of Courland at the head; in a few more the Duke of Holstein may come forward in a quiet but more effective manner: the Dolgouroukis (with the exception of your romantic favourite) are always at work against me. In showing them my wealth on this occasion, and my power with the empress, their intrigues will be removed so far in point of time, that I doubt not bringing my plan into execution before theirs can be brought to bear."

"Poor Mary! I wish I had never seen her, never witnessed her gentle kindness, her filial duty, her active charity—"

"Believe me, Brukenthal, she has far higher qualities than those: her mind is as cultivated as her heart is affectionate; she has been instructed in the art of government, and is not ignorant of the many duties of a sovereign, nor can I doubt that the time will arrive when she will be alive to a noble ambition, and supply to a weak husband the partner required for his people. My daughter is infinitely dear to me; in giving her to my country, I present it with an invaluable boon; nor can I doubt her happiness, seeing she delights in doing good."

"Do not flatter yourself with the belief that she will live to do any," said the pastor, with a deep sigh; "girls of her age often die from disappointments in love."

"Yes; country girls, such as frequent your ministry, I grant, but not girls educated like my daughter; at all events, this risk must be run; if I can get over the first two years, all will be well."

As Menzikoff spoke these words, he went out for the purpose of obeying a summons to inspect one of his temporary temples in the garden. Brukenthal gazed after him so long as he was in sight, saying inwardly, "Can this man be a father? Is it thus that he deals with the child of that fair creature, who bore the reproaches of her kindred for his sake, bestowed on him her beauteous self and her noble fortune? Oh! Alexander, Alexander, how art thou changed since the days of thy boyhood!—the days when, to obtain a scanty meal for a widowed mother was thy greatest earthly happiness! and her thankful smile would send thee back, gladdened though hungry, to new labour: then thou hadst a heart—even yet thou hast one. I saw its workings in thy gasping speech, in thy affected scorn of common feelings and common people; but, alas! it will not avail to give thy child the youth she chose for his virtues, nor even to rescue herself from the hateful fate of enforced union with one to whom she can never be reconciled."

Again he read the papers; and, seeing clearly that the existence of Menzikoff, as a minister, depended on his prosecution of his scheme; that no power to withdraw his daughter remained to him without sinking himself at once into the obscurity he above all things dreaded, and prob-

ably adding punishment to ruin, he prepared to tell Mary the worst, in hopes that she would be so urged to exertion by the pressure of circumstance, the shock would be better endured now than at any other time: and he determined to reach Theodore through the medium of his servants, so as to persuade him to see Mary no more; and by remaining abroad for some years, suffer the grief which could not fail to afflict them both to be softened down by absence. It grieved him deeply to assume the stern and inflexible to one he held so dear; but the more he thought, the more he became certain that she had nothing to hope, and that, therefore, her mind must be braced rather than soothed; she must be taught to exert her powers of endurance and acquiescence. Every Russian girl, in humble life, is married by her father; in high life, by her sovereign. Mary was led to the altar between both; she had no chance for escape; nor would one parent, throughout all her native country, think of justifying a girl capable of desiring to escape from the ennobling distinctions of such a marriage as that which awaited her.

But, however he might reason upon it, the good pastor could not cease to feel it. The candour of Mary, the false hopes with which he had unhappily fed her, the excellence of her choice, and the probability that her destination would be destructive to the happiness and projects of Theodore, and might indeed unsettle and ruin his character, passed rapidly through his mind; and slowly and heavily fell his footsteps as he repaired to the boudoir of the princess, who expected him with equal solicitude, but less hope than her ill-fated daughter.

CHAPTER X.

"DEAR Father Brukenthal," cried Mary, springing forward to meet him, "you walk very slowly, yet your heart would have sped quickly with good tidings: you have not seen my father?"

"Yes! I have been alone with him for an hour."

"And did you venture?—oh, no! I see you did not dare to speak."

"Yea, my dear child, I spoke fully and freely. Alexander Menzikoff can never be to me the terrible personage he may be to others."

"But I fear he has been unkind to you? I am sure you are in grief!"

"You are mistaken—he was not unkind to me: on the contrary, he laid his affairs and his designs before me with all the confidence of our early friendship; neither is he unkind to you, Mary; nevertheless, he cannot accept of your Theodore as his son."

"Was he angry? Did he rave at the Dolgouruki? Did he—"

"On the contrary, he was calm; nay, more, he spoke handsomely of Theodore, and allowed that your preference was the natural result of his good qualities; but beyond this preference, which he will never seem to observe, you must not dare to go, for you are contracted to another."

Mary's countenance became pale with horror, and she staggered towards a seat like one struck with death; but, in another moment, her pale face was flushed, and she eagerly cried out,

"I have made no contract with any human

being, save Theodore, nor ever heard of any till now. If I were to be sold, like a Circassian slave, why was I not told of it before? Why was I educated to exercise my judgment!—to believe myself an accountable being!—to honour virtue, and therefore love a virtuous man? Why should an automaton be gifted with a soul, and denied to exercise its most endeared perceptions?—and, of all other unhappy girls, is the daughter of Prince Menzikoff, the great reformer and improver of Russia, to be made a victim to those laws and customs both himself and his royal master have sworn to rend from the soil."

" You rave, child, you rave; but young hearts are slow to receive the lessons of sorrow; and, under your present sense of disappointment, I cannot wonder at this ebullition; I can only rejoice that your poor mother does not witness it."

" She has lain down till your return, for her anxiety made her feel very poorly; and now!—oh! I pray you, do not rend her heart as you have tortured mine—she loves Theodore as a mother."

" Perhaps I love him better than her—so well, indeed, that I mean to make a pilgrimage to seek him, in order to persuade him that it will be well he should not return for many, *many* years."

Every word the good man uttered fell on the ears of Mary like the funeral knell of all earthly happiness, and she felt astonished that any human being, more especially a Christian priest, could inflict on a creature, so unoffending and so devoted as herself, tortures which to her apprehension far outwent all the racks and knouts with which former sovereigns had tormented their victims. As the thought of the sovereign and his power passed her mind, she conceived the idea of throwing herself at the feet of the empress, and beseeching her interference to save her from any marriage projected by her father; and this thought, which seemed to enter her mind like a beam from heaven, she immediately communicated to her friend.

" The empress, in this affair, is as much concerned as the prince, your father; they combine to give you what they consider a most glorious and enviable fate. You can oppose neither of them; therefore, it is alike duty and wisdom to submit—your father has been seeking this connexion for you many years; he has brooded over it, day and night; he has educated you expressly for it—he believes it will enable you to be a blessing to tens of thousands; and conceives no human being can be miserable who can devote her life to making others happy."

" Then I am to be given to some Polish prince, who seeks to be made a king, and weds me for my father's interest?—or, perhaps, some German sovereign, with territories half as extensive as our own bazars; a standing army of three hundred men; and an unfurnished palace, that, in case of siege, may shelter the whole population of his loving subjects? Pray tell me for what bluebeard I am reserved?"

" No bluebeard, nor blackbeard either, distinguishes your future husband. Years must pass ere he claims your hand; but be not the less assured that you are reserved for him."

" Years!—then I will not despair, dear father; let me again hear you say *years must pass.*"

" No, my child, I will say no more, lest I again deceive you; it is enough that you know your

destination, and learn, as a daughter and a Christian, to submit to it—with you the cares of life have begun early—"

At this moment Menzikoff rushed into the room; his florid face was blanched to paleness, his eyes starting in his head, and both parties cried out, in the same moment, "Heavens! what is the matter?"

" The empress has been fired at, and the bullet meant for her has dangerously wounded a Swedish merchant—never did she go out before without me—fool that I was not to be with her—it is the last time I dare allow her to stir—my horses are now saddling for my congratulatory visit—who knows what the effect may be on her health? I dread the consequences to one so weak and so soon alarmed—to me and mine, the death of the empress might be ruin; ay, instant, irremediable ruin."

" Not so, dear Menzikoff; the heir of the empire is at hand; the boy you have nursed and reared cannot be ungrateful; but go, I beseech you, for unquestionably your presence is needed, both at the palace and in the city. We will break the cause of your absence as gently as possible to the princess, who is now sleeping."

" Yes, yes; tell her the empress was not hurt, and the courier says, 'not exceedingly alarmed'—do not tell her about Count Devrier—we must keep her from all subjects of trouble, as far as possible."

" But what of Count Devrier?" said Mary.

" The empress has banished him to Siberia—did I not tell you? I had no idea poor Catherine had had sufficient spirit when I was not at her elbow. I knew not a word till now, but I shall bear the blame—yes, blame of every kind falls on the proud minister's shoulders; the man who—"

Menzikoff went out while he was speaking, and, in a few moments, was galloping on the road to the Summer Palace with all the speed his Arab courser could supply, but his troubled countenance seemed still before those hearers he had drawn from the contemplation of heartfelt and tender sorrows, to those which agitate empires, and which had evidently shaken the iron nerves of Menzikoff in a terrible manner. Mary was the more sensible to his extreme agitation, because it was evident that it had caused him to forget that which a revengeful spirit had led him so earnestly to desire. Devrier was punished, yet Menzikoff could not rejoice.

" Within only a little time," said Mary, after a long pause, " my father was angry with me for not exerting the influence he supposed me to possess with the empress against this unfortunate, though very blameable uncle. Thank God, I disobeyed him! the groans of the wretched man and his afflicted wife wound not my conscience, though they awaken my pity—in a short time my father's vindictive feelings will be appeased, and then the count will be recalled. Surely, if his first-born child who has never thwarted him, never pursued him, as my uncle did, was to offend his sense of implicit obedience, and refuse that share of a throne he has with mistaken kindness ensured for her, his heart would soon relent towards her; more especially when her choice, though not sanctioned by his consent, was in itself honourable beyond all expectation, and such as a future sovereign may sanction. The dear empress, it is thought, cannot live long; and when little Peter succeeds,

he will consent to anything for a lump of sugar-candy."

Brukenthal was silent, but evidently attentive.

" You speak not, dear sir—I have offended you by my wild complaints, my graspings after the hope which still eludes me. I am wrong, perhaps, even to think of myself when awful events are around me; but what have I to do with kingdoms, when Theodore's heart is all I covet? Forgive me, forgive me, if, in my wretchedness, I talk as a wayward child—to whom can my breaking heart look, save to you who so lately promised me hope and comfort?"

As Mary uttered these words, she threw herself on her knees before Brukenthal, and looked up to him with a countenance of most impassioned grief, blended with a kind of reliance he saw with bitter feelings of pity and disappointment; for the late agony and alarm, depicted in her father's countenance, had told him how great was his dependance on the stake for which he was now playing; and that the loss of his daughter, at a time when her importance was of the highest moment, would not fail to involve him in difficulties she could neither conceive nor avert, but might vainly lament to the end of a wretched existence.

Endeavouring, therefore, to control the agitation she manifested, and that which he also inwardly felt, he raised her from her knees, and placed her on a chair beside him. " Mary," said he, in a tone of tenderness, " I pity you sincerely, but I also wish to esteem you—will you, by compelling yourself to use your reason and religion on this most eventful period of your life, enable me to do so?"

" I will endeavour, indeed I will; but my brain is in confusion, my sorrow overpowers me, and the resolution I make one minute is forgotten the next."

" Not so, princess; though your sorrow is, I grant, excessive, yet your brain is busy with a thousand schemes; and, if you had this night the power of eloping with Theodore, you would not show the virtue you formerly did, though the same cause still exists, seeing your dear mother is now in a precarious state. I wish to speak to you the more explicitly on this subject, because no one knows your father, or his situation, so well as I do; and I assure you, most solemnly, that such a proceeding would not only draw his deep and constant curses on your head, but bring down on him utter ruin. Think you that your mother would forgive you? How could she, when her only son, her daughter Ulrica, and even her newborn babe, would be the sacrifice of your cruel folly? That you are a victim, I grant; but no more of one than your sex in general; for few indeed marry, as your mother did, the man they love. You have no ground of exemption in being more highly educated, since that very circumstance has taught you the importance of fulfilling your duties, the certainty of your final reward, and the acquirement of those accomplishments which amuse and enlighten the mind. Add to this, that, go where you may, you will soon be caught; for both may, under any disguise, be by foreigners very easily discovered, and surrendered to the demands of your country and the indignation of your father, the death of your mother—"

" Death of my mother!"

" Yes! death, I repeat it—her pure spirit will

not long linger in this trying scene; I am certain she will be the victim of the passions of others. Oh! Mary, let not a daughter's folly precipitate her removal. She is the guardian of the poor, the protectress of her dependants, the allayer of your father's vindictive passions, the tender mother of other children meriting her love as well as you. Let not her pure and holy spirit be dismissed by you, ' her firstborn.' "

With downcast eyes and an aching heart Mary listened to the counsels of the priest; her reason told her he was right; her love for her mother was awakened to very agony; and although she could neither persuade herself to believe that Brukenthal could judge of feelings he had never known, or allow that her father had the kindness he professed, she yet held that it was her duty to resign her wishes. She was farther reminded, by Brukenthal, of the unchanging antipathy and enmity her father had so long nourished towards Count Devrier (the husband of his only relative, a lovely sister), and the recollection of this hatred alarmed her for Theodore. She lived in a country, and at a time, when terrible punishments might be perpetrated on those who broke no law and meant no harm, and where mercy was awarded to guilt and denied to innocence; if the will of those in power was led to either purpose—under the full persuasion that there was little hope for her on earth, but a sure judge in heaven who would finally deliver her, she said, at length, in an unfaltering voice,

" Assure my father I will not go hence; there remains to us a means of reunion less dangerous, and eventually more certain, and which depends not upon man."

" My child! my poor child!" said Brukenthal, with great emotion, and Mary saw with surprise tears rolling down his pale cheeks, and all the sterner lineaments of his fine countenance melted, as it were, by the sorrow and pity he felt for one so young and innocent, yet so afflicted. Whatever he might think of the nature of her grief, he yet could not doubt its reality or its intensity. He believed he had advised her well, but of her ability to accede to that advice he could not judge, and, at all events, he saw the struggle must be dreadful.

Mary repaired to her mother's apartment, but not, as was her wont in times of trouble, to throw herself into her arms and weep; no, that mother's health and safety were now uppermost of all the contending ideas affecting her heart. Her countenance was pale, her features rigid; she feared to speak, lest the pent-up agony should burst forth in suffocating tears, and she moved with noiseless step and spectral air round the couch of her mother, who, unable to endure the anxiety consequent on the late interview, had retired to hide herself from the prying eyes of those employed in the palace. She had only to look at Mary, and read in her shrinking, suffering form that the termination of Brukenthal's mission had been fruitless, and probably produced vindictive anger, reproach, and threatening. A chill dread of the future crept over her; and when she tried to rise and embrace Mary, her effort was powerless, and she sunk on the couch in a swoon—protracted so long, that her women pronounced her dead; and her resident physician was eagerly sought for among the crowds now peopling the gardens.

So soon as the princess could speak, she forbade those around to call her husband, and, after

receiving an anodyne, disposed herself to repose, holding the hand of Mary in hers, and assuring her that she was better, and under her care would soon be as well as she was before this slight attack. Mary read her thoughts, and found in them an exhortation to patience, which she sought to practise, and prayed to obtain; but as to therefore dismissing Theodore from the place he occupied in every emanation of her heart and mind, she dreamed not of it, for why should she attempt that which she believed impossible?

The princess herself had, in this respect, as little hope for her as she had for herself. She believed Mary's disposition resembled her own; and, as she had loved but once, and never ceased to love, despite of time and neglect, of an estranged mind, and, at one period, of jealous surmises and the indignation of a wounded spirit, so she supposed her daughter's affection would survive, despite of her endeavours. She had observed in other young people that dissipation and a love of admiration frequently cooled the ardour of a first attachment, and disposed them for listening to those prudent friends who had inspired them with a desire to obtain the rank and fortune which would enable them still to shine in the gay circles they loved, or, perhaps, step over the heads of rival beauties. But Mary had none of this quality in her nature. Pleasure and praise (the praise of admiring eyes and whispered flattery) had done their work, but without effect, on her mind, which might therefore be termed invulnerable; family affection alone was likely to supplant that early and deep-rooted passion so inimical to her happiness.

Both mother and daughter continued silent; this was indeed no time for the confidence of tender hearts, and self-command (the solitary virtue of courts) was in especial demand. It was yet a relief to know, that if they were compelled to smile while their hearts were wrung with anguish, and to assume the aspect of pleasure at the express period when their fondest hopes were relentlessly crushed by the foot of domestic tyranny, the temper of the tyrant must alike be cowed; no loud bickering or stern command must offend the ear of royalty, or disturb the smooth surface of polished society; exhibit to the foreign ambassador the rough countenance of the ancient noble, or shew the dazzled minions of amusement "that all which glitters is not gold," even in royal circles. There would, at all events, be external peace and pleasant looks, while the empress remained in the splendid palace so lately her gift, whatever might be the future state of the inhabitants of Oranienbaum.

CHAPTER XI.

In due time, on the following day, the trumpets sounded, long lines of cavalry pranced proudly, preceding, and following the carriage of the empress and her daughters, the grand-duke, his nominal tutor, and the attendants of all these royal personages. Menzikoff, with his beautiful daughter on his arm, welcomed them at the outer gate; and the princess, still pale and feeble, wrapped in a costly pelisse, met them at the entrance to the palace, surrounded by her children, Brukenthal, and a few other intimate associates.

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It had been the particular request of the prince, after the stormy interview we have related, that his old friend would remain for this day, on which the empress had desired to be as much in private as possible. He knew that Brukenthal understood the manner of courts, was a man of great conversational powers, should they happen to be called upon, and was every way likely to afford pleasure to a quiet invalid, who had more taste for the indolence and luxury of an Eastern princess, than the admiration often sought by waning beauty, or the exertion of unbounded power accorded to absolute monarchy.

The good visiter was restless and unhappy; a night of sleepless anxiety had only shown the scheme of Menzikoff as one full of danger, and he desired to judge for himself how far the empress was the invalid she was said to be, trusting that a woman in her thirty-eighth year, attended by skilful men from various countries, might yet be restored, and in her restoration he thought the safety of his friend might be secured. She had, thus far, been more than grateful, but she was not, therefore, swayed by the caprices of the favourite minister, nor unmindful of the claims of others. With an admirably balancing power she had kept her court in peace, though her courtiers were at war—and had exhibited a kind and merciful spirit, not without effect upon the ferocious and half-civilized among her subjects, offering an example which the better disposed were proud to follow; her reign could hardly fail to be a great blessing to her subjects if continued; whereas, a child on the throne must be a curse, though Menzikoff might be considered, in both cases, the commanding spirit.

The empress took the arm of Menzikoff, and proceeded slowly to the magnificent apartment prepared for her. She had within a short time become considerably larger in her person, her eyes were heavy, and her complexion alternately pale and flushed; but she smiled with parental tenderness on Mary, and praised her for the degree of recovery apparent in her mother, and in a short time began to recall Brukenthal to mind, and talk, as she was wont, of her old friend Gluck, and his goodness to the poor; exclaiming, "Ah! how much more charitable is the man who gives from his own narrow store a small loaf or a poor garment, than he who lavishes that which he can neither want nor use! Sovereigns feed only those already pampered; you poor priests often bestow that which you can ill spare from your own scanty provision, while you are also giving reproof or consolation still more valuable."

However true and general the remark might be, Menzikoff at this moment regretted that he had placed Brukenthal so near to the monarch whom it was his object to absorb. He had allowed few churchmen to approach her, notwithstanding her precarious health, and it had been rather pleasant to him to observe that she rarely desired them, though she often spoke of her state, and had religious books frequently read to her; it had been whispered that she was, in truth, a Lutheran, and her present manners confirmed that supposition; he cared neither for that she professed nor that she approved, but he determined to allow her no privileged priest in either case; therefore, he contrived to draw the attention of Brukenthal to the archduke,

who was admiring all the costly things he saw, and, if of a portable nature, not unfrequently begging them. He was a mean-looking though not an ugly boy; but, being troubled with a convulsive twitching of the mouth and nose, in which he resembled his grandfather, his general appearance was unpleasing, and his utter ignorance was not compensated by the simplicity of childhood. Seen in company with Alexander Menzikoff, he appeared to singular disadvantage, although this young prince was a retiring boy, and by no means fond of being brought forward, either to exhibit his own accomplishments, or attempt to communicate them to the grand-duke.

"They say children learn best of each other," said the empress to Brukenthal, "therefore, I hope my dear Peter will pick up something of geography while he is here. I mean Alexander to teach him, and Mary to nurse me."

"She would teach the grand-duke better than her brother," said Brukenthal, simply, because he thought boys who were engaged with the classics seldom applied to lighter objects; but Menzikoff instantly conceived that his friend had a farther meaning, and was seconding his wishes. He eagerly promised that his daughter should instruct the Czarovitch, and regarded the unconscious priest with a look of such entire kindness and confidence, that Mary's heart sunk lower than ever. She believed that some plot existed between the friends inimical to her future happiness, and totally opposed to the former professions of Brukenthal; and her faith in the existence of virtue sunk, when she was induced to believe that he, on whom she had relied so entirely, was capable of deceiving her.

This sensation was happily removed before the following morning, when the good man returned to his distant people, deeply sympathizing in her sorrow, yet persisting to the last moment of his stay in urging her to overcome her passion, and forbear, especially, to afflict her mother, by showing how much she suffered. Mary saw clearly that in this particular he was right, and she promised to endure the weight on her heart, and the desolation which, to her own conception, surrounded her in lonely resignation; but when he was gone she felt it in all its bitterness.

CHAPTER XII.

On this eventful day, when Menzikoff shone forth with more dazzling splendour than he had ever exhibited, Mary was well aware that it would ill become his daughter to wear a gloomy brow, or, by an abstracted manner, appear to slight some guests, and awaken the conjectures of others. Anxiously and wisely did she school her heart, and repeat the words of Brukenthal on the duty of obedience to her father, and the necessity of affording support to her mother. Though young, as the eldest of her family, she might be supposed to feel only an attempered cheerfulness, seeing that, in the weak state of her mother, the care of entertaining their numerous and noble guests must rest on her; she therefore trusted, that if the cares of her heart in any way affected her countenance, it would be attributed to the solicitude natural to a daughter so situated; and her efforts so far

succeeded, that, although her complexion was variable, and sometimes of almost a deadly pale-ness, she was highly praised by the empress; and the exulting eye of her father seemed to say, "Mary, you are a good child—you have resigned your lover at my command, and must feel happy in your virtue."

Soon, indeed, the scene became so exciting as to absorb the minds and charm the attention of all who were not suffering at the moment from immediate bereavement or severe bodily pain. Far as the eye could see, magnificent equipages, prancing steeds, with splendid housings, numerous attendants, dressed in Oriental costumes of the richest and most gorgeous apparel, were pressing forward on the road, and pouring into the spacious area. Towards the water, the view was still more dazzling, for the extreme beauty of the weather had induced many of the nobility to choose that mode of conveyance. The partiality of Peter the Great for vessels of every description had induced many, towards the latter part of his reign, to exhibit pleasure-boats and yachts of the most elegant and costly character. Many of these came forward, decorated and, apparently, impelled by numerous banners of silk, rowed by boatmen in fancy dresses of the richest hue; and on cushions of velvet sat beautiful women, whose feathers waved in the gentle breeze, and whose diamonds reflected the rays of the summer sun. The dresses of many gentlemen resembled those of the ancient bozars, partaking somewhat of a military character, so that steel and inlaid gold, sword handles, rich with precious stones, and caps with diamond ornaments, were intermixed with cloaks and scarfs of satin and velvet, and stufis of gold and silver.

Mary received all with the complacency of welcome and the grace of practised courtesy, as it had been taught by her modest, elegant, and beautiful mother; but, since she could not have the most distant hope of seeing that dear one, who would, in such a throng, have been the "observed of all observers," her heart was not led to throb with any peculiar emotion. The ceremony of the christening took place in an open pavilion, which at once protected the royal sponsor from the rays of the sun, and afforded a view of the ceremony to the most distant spectator. The Archbishop of Moscow, with several assistant dignitaries, performed the ceremony; and so imposing was the accompanying music, the graceful vestments, and the glittering plate brought forward in aid of the repeated immersion of the babe, that the Pontiff of Rome might have envied the rival church its power of captivating the senses, and compelling a profound impression. There was a deep solemnity which, for a time, fell on every heart; and the tears sprang to many a young mother's eyes as she beheld the fair, unconscious babe received into the bosom of that church which, from her inmost soul, she honoured in simplicity and with sincere devotion; and many a stalwart chief, who had looked with suspicion at the father, as the promulgator of new doctrines as Peter's follower, and a general innovator, felt his prejudices subside at the sight, and said, "This man worships God after the manner of his fathers; I will partake his hospitality, and honour his intentions."

The service of the Greek Church is in itself affecting; but it was rendered still more so

when the empress—the kind empress, who had been ever considerate and benevolent—the beautiful empress, who was the widow of the great Peter, the pride of the land not less than its legal lord, took the babe from the hands of the primate, and pressed it to her bosom. Her action seemed typical of her affection for the whole body of her subjects; and the eager yet trembling haste with which she fulfilled her purpose, at once reminded them of her love and her weakness. The women blessed her with faltering words and sobs that would not be suppressed; but the men, of stronger nerve, yet not less faithful-feeling, gave the loud “hurrah!” that cleft the skies, and “Long live Catherine our empress, the mother of her people!” echoed from shore to shore. The soldiers round the palace, the sailors in Cronstadt, the numerous attendants on the noble train, the far-distant multitude, drawn by the boons of Mensikoff, or the curiosity natural to all, alike shouted “Long live the Empress Catherine!” and the cannon from the batteries of Oranienbaum confirmed the voice by volleys that were answered by the neighbouring port with still louder, though more distant acclamations.

Rapidly as this passed, the empress, who was exceedingly affected, found she could not retain her burden. The Princess Mensikoff stood close beside her, pale, trembling, and overwhelmed. The young princesses her daughters, and the daughters of her late husband and sovereign, were there also, to receive the light eneumbrance; but, by a rapid glance of the eye, she summoned Mary, who was kneeling at a distance, to her side, and, holding out the babe to her, she, by an evident effort, thus addressed her:

“Mary (Princess Mensikoff), take this child from the arms of your sovereign, and, remember, she commits it to your care. Its mother and its godmother are nearly of the same age, and they may be removed nearly at the same time; therefore, to you I commit it as your present sister and future daughter. I hold it not the less in the light of a child whom the royal family of Russia is bound to protect; and I trust my love and my general conduct have entitled me to demand, not less from tenderness than duty, their attention to a request which may—may be the last I shall ever make them.”

It was observed, by those around, that the grand-duke stared as not understanding the appeal of his grandmother-in-law; that the young princesses were laughing, save the Princess Sophia, who, rushing forward, eagerly kissed the child, and would have taken it from the arms of Mary, if the father had not claimed it.

Such were the ceremonies performed, the feelings excited, when Catherine, the youngest child of Mensikoff—the lovely creature he fondly termed “the child of his age,” made her *entrée* into life, in its best and holiest sense, as a helpless, therefore humble Christian.

The company now assembled round tables placed for the banquet, in a beautiful glade, shaded by majestic trees, and awnings of the most suitable colours, disposed in draperies, and, when seated, formed a *coup d'œil* of surpassing magnificence. Whatever could tempt the eye or the palate, in luxurious viands and sparkling wines, were served with a profusion that awoke astonishment no less than pleasure, and, for the time, envy was suspended, and ha-

red quelled, in that admiration the princely host excited by his unequalled *fitz*. The banquet over, the guests retired to the palace, where a concert awaited them, performed by the choicest musicians and singers of Europe—for Italian *artistes* had already found their way to the Northern court.

During the period when the illustrious and noble visitors were thus employed, the gardens were everywhere illuminated; and the superiority of the Russians in this mode of decoration was here so fully proved, that the ambassadors of France, Italy, Germany, and England, freely owned their surpassing excellence. The gay dance succeeded in a temporary ballroom of immense dimensions, ornamented with the general good taste displayed; but here the empress did not appear, and the young princesses were consigned to the wardship of Princess Mensikoff, herself little equal to the fatigue. The grand-duke was with difficulty induced to open the ball with Mary, though a little dancing was his only accomplishment; but the boy was tired, and sleepy, potted and wayward. Mary remarked, that “their future emperor would not work as the last had done, either at Saardam or Deptford;” but they did not the less crowd around him with admiring eyes and crouching servility, as the sun which would soon gild their future horizon, and might be safely worshipped now his superior had retired.

In the gardens Mary first saw the younger Count Sapieha; and, considering him as the dear friend of Theodore, and the person of whom, most probably, he constantly inquired respecting her, she earnestly desired to speak with him in private; but, such was the universal trepidation under which she laboured, that it was some time before she could give him the encouraging look he required in order to address her. Alarmed by the situation in which she found herself, she fancied that Theodore himself must be near, and that nothing less could have so moved her save this dear object; but when Sapieha actually addressed her, his countenance, not less than his words, assured her that she was parted by a long distance, of both land and sea, from the object on which her “mind's eye” was continually gazing. “Theodore,” said he, “is visiting a dear and faithful friend, whom I can sincerely esteem, notwithstanding I hold him as a rival. He went to Germany at my suggestion, for I saw that the devouring anxiety under which he existed was making terrible inroads in his health, and had even begun to affect his excellent temper. I thought a change of scene absolutely necessary to him. You ladies can bear suspense and solitude better than we of the ruder sex—you bend to the breeze, and it passes over you; you mingle with the gay, and become gay by contagion.”

Mary felt these words as repreaches; and remembering how very lately she had been blamed by Brukenthal for indulging the contrary disposition, and resigning herself to the sorrows of a too tender heart, tears sprang to her eyes, and she answered hastily, “Count, you know not how little of gayety, or even composure, I have long known; but is this a time for Mensikoff's daughter to indulge such feelings!—this a time to forsake the duties she owes to such a mother as hers!”

“Dear princess, I meant not to wound you,” cried Sapieha; “you must have many hours of deep solicitude, surrounded as you always are by

those who love you ; and dreading, as you must do, that some one will be favoured by your father, to whom you will be compelled to yield obedience. Ah ! 'tis a hard lot, that of woman ; the happiest are those who have no hearts, and perform their parts in life like the actors in a theatre. But why do I moralise in such a scene as this ? let us dance together ; I will be Theodore's substitute. What a pity he is not here !'

Many remarks were made on this short partnership, which was thought to indicate violent passion, or mean condescension, on the part of the count, and coquetry on that of Mary ; but Menzikoff himself thought differently ; he had heard of the friendship of the young men, and directly conceived the idea that some plot was forming against his commands, notwithstanding the assurance he had received from a daughter who had hitherto been so obedient, and who that very day had exerted herself to the utmost to please him. Elated by the grandeur which surrounded him, and more especially by the apparent stability of his many high offices, as appearing confirmed by the present kindness and friendship of the reigning and future sovereign, he felt as if the whole world were at his feet, and thought it an absolute sin for any human being to indulge a wish not warranted by his permission.

Mary, the stepping-stool of future honours, had ever been his dearest child ; but yet she was, in his estimation, no more than any other vassal of his will, and, while he applauded the strength of her understanding and energies, he had no conception of any right she possessed to use her understanding, or exercise either faculties or affections, save at his bidding. Such are the errors common to despots corrupted by power and blinded by pride—who, on their outset in life, were warm-hearted and amiable, considerate and generous.

Menzikoff soon took care to part Mary from the only person in that vast assemblage with whom her heart could exchange a word in confidence ; and Sapicha, seeing his design, or, rather, reading his suspicions, made an ostentatious leave-taking, and departed in his yacht, thereby depriving Mary of her power to send any tender remembrance to Theodore. Others soon followed, and the dawn of day saw the gay multitudes depart, amid the confusion and fear belonging to numerous intoxicated servants too much elevated to obey injunction, or too much stupefied to be sensible of what was required. So far as it was possible, the princely host protected all, and facilitated the wishes of all ; for he appeared like a presiding genius, issuing commands, as of yore, in the field of battle, or giving instruction with such happy precision and effect as to enlighten the dullest intellect, and soothe the most intimidated party ; and, from his care and prescience, not one of her majesty's subjects was injured of that vast company ; but their risk, throughout the following day, excited her most serious apprehensions, until the return of various messengers sent out for purposes of inquiry.

CHAPTER XIII.

THEATRICAL performers, rope-dancers, jugglers, and equestrian exhibitors, had been engaged to form a succession of diversions on the

following days ; and although the empress did not always partake them, it will be readily conceived that the young grand-duke and his sisters, with a few of the junior nobility and the family of Prince Menzikoff, enjoyed every novelty, and were never weary of running about those beautiful grounds, and dictating improvements, or requesting diversions.

The empress, nevertheless, insisted that some short time should be given to study ; and several efforts were made to tie the future autocrat to a book or map for half an hour, under the tutelage of Mary, that of Alexander being utterly disclaimed, because "he was so clever and knew so much, it was quite disagreeable in a boy of one's own age." The task was a wearisome one ; and perhaps poor Mary would have shrunk from it, gentle and sweet-tempered as she was, if she had not felt that her father's eyes were upon her continually, as an offending member of his family, from whom he had a right to expect reparation for error. She also well knew that her mother's return to health depended on her father's kindness, and that for both their sakes she must propitiate the empress, to whom she was already bound in gratitude for distinguishing marks of favour.

To the grief of all the family, the sovereign, in a very few days, resumed that habit which had already injured her, of sleeping out of doors in the afternoon. Her *siesta* was, indeed, often prolonged to evening ; and the warmth of the season, its well-known shortness, and the beauty of the gardens, with their numerous temporary bowers, formed so many excuses for the indulgence. As this and drinking Tokay wine to the comfitures on which she subsisted were points on which she admitted no advice, and respecting which no remonstrance could be offered while she was a guest, Prince Menzikoff now sought to secure her solace and comfort in repose, and contrive that the least possible evil should arise from the practice.

To this end all the most attractive parts of the gardens were prohibited to every other inmate of the palace, and amusements that admitted of it removed to a distance. Firing and ringing of bells were forbidden at the neighbouring port of Cronstadt ; and the fishermen, who plied their quiet calling in the gulf opposite, were commanded not to shout or sing, and promised reward, provided "they watched that no possible annoyance should arise from parties on the water." The large gates, which had lately given access to the visitants who had voyaged thither, were securely closed ; and only a small door in the wall remained by which any entrance could be obtained, and this was carefully guarded. Oranienbaum was fortified towards the water, and even its powers, as a castellated fortress, were called up to preserve the royal visitant from all possible annoyance.

But amusements within the palace now became more in demand by the young princesses ; and Ulrica, proud of their notice, brought forward various works and drawings, which they desired to learn and copy, Mary being expressly told to apply herself to amusing the heir of the empire. This was every day more difficult, for his total ignorance of books, his deficient curiosity on points which boys in general desire to be acquainted with, rendered it next to impossible for a female to offer him pastime ; her books and music, her plants and birds, her pity for the

poor whom she relieved, her schemes for benefiting the intelligent whom she patronised, had no corresponding chord in his bosom ; and he either yawned over her description, or, with the petulance which generally accompanies constitutional weakness in his sex, became fretful and reproachful.

Peter had, for the last two years, been told that if he obeyed the empress she would leave him the crown of all the Russias, and make him the greatest potentate on the face of the earth ; therefore Peter had been generally inclined to obey her ; but the yoke her mild temper had imposed had neither led him to desire information, nor taught him the slightest habit of self-denial. Like many boys of his age, he had an inordinate desire to be manly, and concluded that athletic sports would make him a man, and as soon as he was a hunter, he would be deemed a hero. His personal weakness hitherto had counteracted his wishes ; and Menzikoff had, in true kindness, opposed his inclination, and, by accompanying him, suffered him only to take as much exercise as he knew his strength was equal to bearing. Much as he frequently suffered in consequence of his exertions, the wayward boy was too often angry with the restraining hand that saved him from more ; and it was foreseen, by many in his own circle of attendants, that the time was advancing when his judicious friend would be considered his personal enemy. The empress, on the contrary, thought, that as his mind strengthened, his judgment must show him the value of a guardian so wise and faithful.

The gentle kindness of Mary's manners ; her exquisite beauty and elegant deportment ; the musical sweetness of her voice, a quality which affected him (as that of her father had delighted his great ancestor) ; and the pains she took to amuse or teach him, had evidently impressed him much in her favour ; and he would now often accompany her to the library, and listen to historical facts or anecdotes of adventurous travellers. He also would carefully follow the finger which traced out, on the map, those lands he expected to govern ; and listened, with especial avidity, to the names of different nations and tributaries whom he considered born to serve him.

Though usually silent, he would, in turn, tell her something of the pleasures he expected, the people he liked or those he liked not ; and, puerile as were his communications, since he mentioned the visits of the Dolgourouki occasionally, Mary fondly listened, in the hope of again hearing "the one loved name." She knew that Theodore would wait on the empress previously to leaving the country, and she did not know that he was there more than once. She had never heard of his refusing service in Persia, it being indeed unlikely that, however angry his father might be, he should expose his son to her majesty's anger. Several days had, however, passed ; and the grand-duke had talked, at times, of every noble about court, every general in the army, every handsome and ugly woman, and splendid dress he had ever beheld, without once naming the *one* person whom she desired to be mentioned.

At length, in extreme trepidation, "I think," she said, "you told me that Prince Theodore Dolgourouki gave you—"

"Prince Theodore ! I told you no such thing !

It was Ivan, his cousin, who is gone to Persia, that gave me my white pony ; and, when he returns, we shall go a-hunting together. I love him better than anybody in the world ; and when he comes back, I know he will make me a man, in spite of the pie-man."

"And Theodore gave you nothing ?" said Mary, loving-to linger on the name.

"How should he, when he is gone to Germany ? Show me Germany in the map : oh ! there it is, in such great letters ! what a very large city Germany must be !—tell me all about it."

But Mary's thoughts were wandering afar, and the fear that they might never meet again had been excited by words which, undoubtedly, gave no new information, yet operated painfully on her feelings. She became incapable of attending to the frivolous questions of Peter, and stood pale and silent, revolving the many painful peculiarities of her position, when she was suddenly roused from her reverie by a smart slap on the arm, and the angry voice of her companion, exclaiming,

"What do you look so queer for ? I shall not like you if you don't speak when I want you to speak. I like Ivan Dolgourouki better than Theodore, because he talks and laughs, and old empress Kate, too, because she is a good-natured granny, and tells me about sieges and getting into the oven. I did love you very well, but I won't love you if you don't attend to me every moment, I can tell you that, Princess Mary."

The extreme ill-humour and boorishness in which the last words were spoken, induced even the gentle girl to reply,

"I don't want you to love me, prince."

"But everybody else wants me to love you, I can tell you that, too ; besides, if I don't love you, I sha'n't marry you, I can assure you, miss."

"Marry me !" said Mary, mechanically.

"Yes, marry me ! the empress says I must, or she won't leave me the crown ; and that three are as near it as I am, with more years and more sense than I have ; and she says, too, Russians like female sovereigns, and such nonsense. I dare say it is a lie, and that your father is at the bottom of it ; for Ivan Dolgourouki says he manages everything, and that it was all along of him I was not made an emperor when gruff grandfather popped off. Well, don't look so very sad, Mary ; I don't like pale people ; and I love you very well when you chatter to me."

Mary heard him no longer. The mysterious something which her mother had long dreaded ; the inexplicable question of Brukenthal when he spoke of her father's long-nurtured project, and insisted on the necessity of her submission, broke upon her mind like a mighty cataract, at once overwhelming her by its suddenness, and sweeping from her the last vestige of hope and happiness. A mist came over her eyes ; her frame trembled ; she put forth her hand to seize the table near which they were standing, but failed, and fell upon the floor.

The boy-lover, believing her to be struck with sudden death, rent the air with his cries for help ; and the library was filled with friends and attendants, by whose care she was soon restored to consciousness. The seizure was accounted for in various ways, all far removed from the true cause, for Peter himself gave no

ew for it farther than saying "she looked comical, and did not speak ; so he scolded her, but only a little ; and he would have said nothing, if he had thought it would give her a fit."

The physician thought she had exerted herself too much, and been too anxious for one so delicate ; but the alarmed mother well knew, that when in ordinary health, both her mental and bodily constitution could bear much more ; and the expression of her countenance, when she returned to life and its troubles, assured her that some terrible and hitherto unsuspected evil had fallen on her gentle and almost idolized Mary.

The secret soon transpired. Peter, who could not forbear to consider himself in some way the cause of her swoon, crept up to the Princess Menzikoff, who was assisting the attendant to remove her daughter, and whispered thus :

"All I said was just telling her, that if she did not do all I wanted, I would not marry her. That was all, I assure you, princess ; but I will marry her, for all that, since you all want me, and because she is so pretty."

"Are you jesting, prince ? What can you mean ?"

"I mean I will marry Mary ; my grandmother says I must ; and, since I love her and love you, why shouldn't I ? You know I grow older every day."

The princess could not reply. With faltering steps she followed her she deemed a devoted victim ; and, when the mother and daughter were alone, a warm embrace and a burst of agonizing tears told each party that the thunder-cloud had burst which they alike had dreaded so long, that Mary must now be inevitably sacrificed on the altar of her father's ambition — for when did he falter on the threshold of any scheme that admitted him to power ?

Deeply did the princess now deplore that love for her had restrained her daughter from accepting that means of flight which Theodore had provided ; for she trusted that, in the then immature state of his hope of attaining an object so far beyond all ordinary conception, he might have yielded forgiveness to Mary, and found, in his connexion with Theodore, the advantages so evident to Brukenthal, and commented upon so strongly : but all hope on this head was evidently over, and the absence of the lover likely to be taken advantage of to hurry on the irretrievable step. Nor could she, indeed, under these declared circumstances, bear for a moment to contemplate Mary subjected to the curses of her father, and that father suffering under the displeasure of the empress, exposed to the machinations of his enemies, and compelled, with his helpless and innocent children, to meet the keenest blasts of adversity.

It was altogether impossible to brave the natural indignation of the court. The convent would afford no refuge, for Mary had never spoken of a conventional life as her choice ; and though Peter at this time would probably prefer any toy that could be offered to him, if obstacles arose, he would become clamorous from opposition. Look which way she might, the prospect was appalling, and every hope for her child's peace and happiness in domestic life was quenched forever. The princess, with the feelings of a tender mother, had nourished dreams of felicity for her daughter that she had long re-

signed for herself. The independence of Theodore's mind, his resolution to avoid the excitements of ambition, and seek only the calm enjoyments of domestic life and the benefit of his fellow-creatures, had won for him her affection and respect ; and in dwelling on the possible happiness of Mary, she had been enabled to endure her own anxieties. Even when Brukenthal had pronounced the utter incompatibility of her scheme for the future with that of Menzikoff, to whom all must bend, she rather assented than believed ; but now, the long-dreaded development of his plans had taken a tangible shape, and her heart sunk before it : the daughter she had nourished so tenderly, approved so entirely, was doomed to be more a victim than she had ever been herself.

The consequence of this shock to one so weak, and who had already exerted herself beyond her power, was an attack of fever during the ensuing night, which alarmed her attendants, and brought Mary again to her couch, when her affectionate anxiety as a daughter quickly superseded all other fears. Indeed, she had already gained some comfort from the supposition that little Peter must wait so long ere he claimed her hand, that many circumstances might arise to thwart her father's designs, with which her personal conduct could have little to do. It has been said, "hope springs eternal in the human breast ;" but that is only in the season of youth : it is also *then*, when in the pressure of trouble, it looks to death as a natural relief, and feels that, under certain circumstances, that "terminator of sorrows" must arrive. Mary had said to herself a thousand times, "I shall die, dear Theodore, and I desire to die :" but this was not the language of her mother. In youth, we wish to fly from trouble ; in maturity, we seek to sustain it.

When the empress met Menzikoff in the morning, she was herself extremely languid and unwell, and seemed to have a superstitious fear that sickness, and, consequently, sorrow, had fallen on the mansion, as a retribution for the late grandeur and gayety it had exhibited so abundantly. After having visited the princess, she professed an intention of returning to her own home that day, but was persuaded to complete her engagement, and depart on the morrow, under the escort of the prince, who was extremely relieved to find that, in the course of the day, she spoke of the projected alliance with pleasure and satisfaction, and wished the betrothal to take place at a more early period than he had presumed to hope for. This auspicious temper increased when it was known that the princess was better ; the truth being a belief in the empress that Mary's skill and kindness must be restorative on all to whom it was exerted, and a desire to benefit by it in her own person.

The grand-duke, disliking Alexander, whose presence seemed to act as a reproach to his ignorance and folly, was clamorous for the company of Mary, and wondered "what people were ill for when they ought to be well," until reminded "that the empress herself was poorly, and could not help it, and even Peter the Great had died, and—"

"Could not help it, I suppose ? Perhaps not ; but he could have helped my father dying, I've a notion."

The empress cast upon Menzikoff a look of troubled inquiry ; and soon after, when the boy

'had left the room, for the purpose of what he truly called "plaguing his sisters," she observed that, " notwithstanding her constant care to guard Peter from obtaining knowledge of past circumstances, which could do him no good, and might influence his disposition and temper unpleasantly, he certainly received whispered communications from some one, which tended to derogate from his respect to his grandsire. No one," she added, in a voice of deep feeling, "has more lamented the death of his unhappy father than myself—no one known the consequent sufferings of his grandfather half so much as myself; therefore, I am the more anxious that all should be forgotten. In condemning the late emperor for one error, a boy like Peter will be apt to condemn him for all; and, since many of the nobles want the sense and the patriotism requisite to further the glorious improvements he meditated and partly accomplished, Russia may return to the barbarism from which she is even now only emerging. Peter the Second may undo all that Peter the First so nobly effected."

"I tremble for that myself," said Menzikoff; "and Heaven is my witness, that, in desiring power for myself or my daughter, the great endeavour of my heart is to forward the purposes of my great, my glorious master! Your majesty has already done much; but two years are a short period in which to assist the civilization of so many millions."

"We have, however, done great things, even in that time, Menzikoff, thanks to your abilities and devotedness; and if we are not thwarted—"

"Thwarted!" cried the minister. "Who shall dare to do it? Has your majesty suspected any attendant of the young prince? If so—"

"Hold, Menzikoff! I will sign no more committals to Siberia. There are many shivering there, I fear, at this moment, whose hearts were once warm and true towards me. I must, like all others, risk something, and leave the purity of my motives to plead for themselves; but I will not run the chance of inflicting cruel punishments on persons who might, from mere thoughtlessness, say words which, although mischievous, were void of guilty intention."

"Fools do more harm than rogues, and should be taught to govern their tongues by restraining the use of them. I do not call freezing an unruly member a *cruel punishment*; it may be a useful one."

"I cannot jest on this, Menzikoff. Banishment alone from our fellow-creatures and friends is a dreadful affliction; and when to this are added poverty and sickness, with no hand to help, no tongue to speak comfort; a wife and innocent children perishing of hunger before our eyes; a gulf like that of death between us and the world—oh! it is terrible to bear; terrible, therefore, to sentence. We must look into it. There are many who ought to be recalled, and shall be. I see them in my dreams; I think of them when I am sleepless. Never let me hear you talk of that, as a light punishment, which has appalled the bravest hearts that ever beat, in times past, and may do so again in time to come."

The empress rose, and walked slowly towards the door; the usually ready arm of Menzikoff was not offered for some seconds: the slowly-uttered words of the empress had fallen not only on his ear, but his heart, and suddenly

quelled the haughty and vindictive sensations which had so lately risen and revelled there. Suddenly, a sense of his own wisdom in attaining the highest point of elevation, and thereby securing himself from the malice of fortune, re-animated him, and he sprang to the empress, who accepted his assistance, but remained silent, as if most painfully impressed by the recollections that agitated her bosom.

The following morning all were on the alert; and Mary, pale as the cambric which formed her morning habiliments, waited on their royal guest at breakfast, and reported some slight improvement in the health of her mother. It was with extreme difficulty she conquered a repugnance which now sprang up in her mind towards the young prince, prompting her to consider him in the light of an implacable enemy, who would pursue her to destruction. Yet, when she looked at him, or was compelled to listen to him, dislike became, perforce, contempt, and her mind could not bend to acknowledge such a being as the controller of her destiny. Ardently did she desire the society of Brukenthal: and, though his words were ever present to her memory, she felt as if his actual presence were necessary to enable her to fulfil their import. Such was her distress, so frequently would unbidden tears swell into her beautiful eyes, that even the youngest princesses noticed it; but they naturally imputed it to the situation of her mother, as did the empress; but as her father did not, he willingly hastened the departure of the royal party, fearful of further observation.

Again the cavalcade, escorted by guards and soldiers, excited the admiration of toiling serfs and wandering mendicants, or claimed the envying gaze of their superiors, who were yet at an immeasurable distance from the outermost precincts of royalty. To the spectators, all appeared *couleur de rose*; yet, amid the trappings of rank and wealth, the *moth* and *rust*, which belong to humanity, were privately marking their prey; the empress was sensible of increased indisposition; the great man, however determined in his conduct, felt those tuggings at the fibres of his heart, which the consciousness of his wife's and daughter's sufferings could not fail to inspire; and all the younger branches of the imperial family were silently brooding on the loss of Oranienbaum, as a demesne far too magnificent to be the abode of any subject, and inwardly blaming the generosity of the empress in having alienated it from the family of her late husband. Its noble rooms, costly furniture, and surrounding gardens, studded with temples and statues, enriched by verdant avenues and choice exotics—all furnished subjects of regret, according as the tastes of each party inclined them to select beauties on which memory rested, and all were observed to be sullen and fretful; less inclined to acknowledge the pleasure they had enjoyed, than to dispute the right of Prince Menzikoff as its dispenser.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE are moments of consolation to all those who sorrow, when the nature of their suffering is ascertained, and both mother and daughter experienced great relief when the em-

press and her interminable train had departed, and they could enjoy the sad privilege of weeping together. Mary was, however, sensible that it was her duty to check that desire for sympathy which was so natural to her situation, and, so far as it was possible, bear her burden alone, and with apparent fortitude, as she clearly perceived that the mental disquietudes of her mother had a far more sensible effect on her weakened frame than they exercised upon her own.

To seek for help in humble prayer, and also recall the words of Brukenthal as the rule of her future conduct, was all she could do; but the princess aided her, by urging her to supply her own place in restoring order to the disarranged household, and in exciting that kind attention to her baby-sister which the affections of her nature were so capable of supplying. Mary did all she could, all that a wandering imagination and estranged heart allowed; and, in the evening, finding that her mother had sunk into slumber, she resolved to take a solitary walk in the garden, rejoicing that it remained for this day under the embargo laid on it for the empress's pleasure, and that not a single attendant would cross her path, or interrupt those meditations which were at once her consolation and her bane.

The stillness and comparative desolation of the gardens suited the tone of Mary's spirits, and softened into pensive meditation the keener sense of grief under which she had lately laboured. Indeed, if any external scene could sooth the throbings of an anxious heart, and awaken patience or resignation in a bosom religiously disposed, the tranquil beauties and softened gloom of those umbrageous avenues, traversed beneath the light of an evening sun, were likely to effect it.

Mary's steps led her towards the sound of the surge, which here broke so near the walls, she thought its murmuring would aid the soothing influence she sought; but, on passing an alcove frequently used by the empress for the same reason, she was startled by perceiving a man emerge from it, who had the habit of a foreigner, but yet of a seaman. She was too far from the house for any cry to be heard, and she felt that she had not strength to fly; therefore, with a resolution inspired even by her fears, she stood still, as awaiting his approach.

The height of the stranger was commanding, his air noble—in a moment the truth flashed upon her, and she cried out involuntarily, "Theodore!"

"You are alone, Mary? quite alone?"

"I am: you have nothing to fear, though perhaps I tremble; the surprise, the—the—"

"Say pleasure, Mary? surely that much you may concede me—"

"Willingly—Heaven knows how willingly!" said she, submitting to his ardent embrace. "But, alas! Theodore, our difficulties are so increased that I cannot help believing pleasure, and even hope, are taken from us forever."

"For that very reason, as Sapicha has so often urged to me, it is necessary to seize happiness for ourselves. Listen, Mary; our time is precious."

"Ay, very, very precious. What would you say?"

"When you last left me, Mary, I became so wretched, and so deeply impressed with the belief that your father would dispose of you, per-

haps suddenly, to some foreign prince, in order to strengthen his interest; so fearful that my own father might also return and forward such design, in order to prevent me from a union he would abhor, that I reviewed those arguments in favour of our elopement with a different perception of our case to what I had before. I knew, from your good governess, that the princess, your mother, however she approved our conduct, regretted its consequences; and I considered, that although it would have been perhaps dangerous to have taken you from her on the eve of her confinement, when that was over you might quit her safely, and she would readily reconcile herself to a loss so necessary to your happiness. For this purpose I went to my friends in Germany, and have so arranged everything—nay! start not, Mary; our case is desperate—"

"Yes! desperate, hopeless. We must submit to our fate, Theodore, unhappy that we are," cried Mary, bursting into tears.

"Not so, beloved of my soul! —all is prepared, all things are ready; even the excellent Henrietta Rensa is on board the vessel with her brother, which has for the last three days anchored in the Gulf of Cronstadt. I have been twice before in these gardens, where I saw not a human being, but I know I have been observed, and cannot come here again without discovery. Happily, you are now shrouded in that large veil, and the sun is just setting; my boat paddles within a short distance, and—"

"Ah, no! nothing is favourable to us, dear Theodore; nothing!"

"Nay, look not so despondingly, dear Mary. We shall soon reach Dantzic, and there will be married; from thence we can fly to Switzerland, that beautiful country you oft desired to see; then we shall realize all the bliss that young, fond hearts desire in this world, and go gently hand in hand towards another."

"Impossible, Theodore! either my father or your own could drag us from the highest abp, or pluck us from the humblest valley, and they alike would oppose our union. In this one point, at least, they would agree."

"Then let us to England, the land of the fearless and the free; in that island home the sea will throw its protecting arms around us, and—"

"Oh! Theodore, think you that in pursuit of his vengeance, Prince Menzikoff would hesitate to make war on England? No! though the rude hordes he collected would ruin the fairest lands of Europe as he advanced to that noble island, and death menaced all who reached her! No! he would still press on; and what would follow his footsteps save blood, and tears, and famine? Shall the cry of the widow and the orphan, the death of the brave, the ruin of the innocent, the misery of tens of thousands, come at our bidding, and draw the curse of Heaven on our union? Nay, God forbid!"

Mary wept passionately as she spoke, and seemed about to withdraw, but Theodore snatched her with an emotion bordering on agony, and drew her closer to his breast, as in a half-suffocated voice he said,

"Then, Mary, we will go far, far from the shores of Europe. We will leave the Old World, with its grandeur, its governors, and the fetters they forge for fond hearts like ours. Yes, we will go to New-England, where the very name of your father is unknown; where a band of hardy, industrious, and religious men unite to

cultivate a land resembling our own, but far superior. With them we can enjoy intercourse of heart and mind ; we can assist their purposes, partake their virtues and safety, without injury to any human being—”

“ Yes, one, one, the dearest, the best ; my mother, who is now more an object of anxiety than when you saw her last ; with you, Theodore, I could go gladly to the farthest confines of the globe. I could dwell, thankfully, in the mud cottage of the rudest serf ; with my own hands I could prepare our food, and make our garments ; nothing could be too homely or difficult for me, but I cannot quit my mother in her weakness. How could she know I lived and enjoyed my state of new and extraordinary existence ? How could her meek spirit endure my father’s reproaches, the empress’s anger, the ruin of her whole family, brought on by that ungrateful girl, whom she taught so well, and nurtured so tenderly. Oh ! Theodore, you could not bear to injure her yourself, I know you could not ; we should be alike wretched and guilty, and in our misery even cease to love each other—”

“ Never, Mary ! never. Our sufferings would bind us the closer to each other ; and when our friends were enabled to inform her what was our destination (which Sapicha could easily effect), she would be reconciled. Besides, great and terrible changes may take place here, and within a short time, and who can say that the wanderers beyond the Atlantic may not be the means of giving an asylum to those who have driven them thither ? It will be better to seek the plains of New-England than—”

“ Alas ! Theodore, you know not, nor can I bear to tell you, the changes about to take place ; but be assured they confirm my father’s greatness, and increase, not diminish, his power. He meditates—yes, he expects an alliance with the throne.”

It instantly struck Theodore that Menzikoff was seeking to break his marriage bond by some unheard-of wickedness, and endeavouring to form a union with the empress, who had been said, in early life, to have held him too dear. Recoiling with the natural horror of a virtuous mind, he stepped aside, and Mary perceived two tall athletic men advancing immediately behind ; she seized his arm to point them out, when a voice from the water called out aloud, “ Fly ! fly ! ” It was the voice of Rensa ; and in such alarm were the words uttered, that Theodore turned to obey the warning instinctively ; but even as he did so, a sheet was thrown over him by the men, and, although he struggled excessively, they succeeded in bearing him away to the postern-gate by which he had entered ; in another moment Mary rushed after, rending the air with her shrieks ; but a key had been left in the door, which was instantly turned, and she beat against it in the fruitless ecstasy of horror and despair ; a loud shriek was followed by the splash of a fallen body in the water, and then all perception of terror and sorrow ceased, for she fell by the door as utterly senseless and lifeless as the stones on which she sank.

CHAPTER XV.

The Princess Menzikoff awoke about midnight, much restored by the calm sleep she had

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enjoyed in consequence of the stillness of the palace, and the absence of any of these little vexations which add small stings to great sorrows, and lacerate a wound already bleeding. She naturally looked for that dear daughter who so generally was seated near her couch, and for a moment rejoiced that she was not there ; seeing that the lamps indicated the departure of day, long as it lingers during the summer season in Russia. A nurse, disturbed by her motion, arose and said, “ The Princess Mary had not entered the apartment since she threw a veil over her, saying, ‘ she was about to walk in the gardens till sunset.’ ”

It was immediately ascertained that she had not returned to the palace, and the alarmed mother instantly concluded that she had followed the example of the empress, and was sleeping on a couch in one of the arbours. Several attendants were immediately despatched in search of her, but every recess was explored in vain, and she was at length discovered by one stumbling over her, who had imagined she might have been borne away through the small gate by some unknown enemy or daring lover.

The motion of carrying her into the house, to a certain degree, recovered her from the long swoon she had suffered ; but it was evident, even to the most ignorant observer, that her senses were not restored, and that she was alarmingly ill. A coarse covering for the head had been picked up in the garden, and, about the same place, there were marks of feet deeply indented, as if some struggle had taken place ; therefore, some contended that robbers had been in the grounds, and, being discovered by the princess, had sought to bear her away, but, on finding her apparently dead, had flung her back ; all conjecture was, however, hushed by the appearance of the alarmed mother, who instantly required the presence of the physician, by whose orders she was placed in a warm bed, and restoratives administered by every medium.

A violent fever ensued, and the first words which escaped her lips were those of delirium. It had been the intention of Menzikoff not to return to Oranienbaum for two days, as he had much business to transact at the capital, in consequence of his long absence ; but the princess became so alarmed in the course of the ensuing day, that she sent a courier entreating his instant return, also the presence of other medical men of note. On receiving this message, Menzikoff considered that Mary (his guileless Mary) was getting up some pantomime to divert him from his purpose, since she could not fail to know he was making court to the empress, in order to expedite by every means the scheme on which he had so long laboured. The demand for the physicians, however, staggered him, since they could not fail to discover whether her illness was a feint or not ; therefore, after securing their attendance, he returned in extreme ill-humour, thinking that, whether innocently or not, the whole affair of her illness, by thwarting his designs, justified his anger. What providence does a despot own but his own will ? And does not the exercise of unlimited power, the attainment of unequalled wealth, make every one a despot ?

The sad looks of every one at the palace convinced him there was cause for alarm, since all could not have been tutored to act a part, and he hastened to the couch of the invalid, who,

restless and tossing, fixed her eyes upon him with some degree of recognition, which was the first time she had manifested such power. He was instantly subdued by the evident reality of her illness, and the altered character of her countenance, and said, in the soft and tremulous accents of parental alarm, "Mary! dear Mary!"

"He is drowned—drowned, I tell you."

"What does she mean?" said Menzikoff to his weeping wife.

"I cannot suppose she affixes any meaning to these words, though she repeats them often. All she utters is wild and incoherent, the effect of delirium, and I fear much bodily suffering."

"There must be no speaking in her chamber," said the physician; "and it would be better that those she loves should not be much in her presence; the fever may be soon reduced, but the shock her spirits has received may affect the brain for a considerable period—"

"But her life," cried Menzikoff—"do you promise me her life?"

"Certainly not; she is very dangerously ill, and no wise man will venture to promise, or predict, in such a case."

Menzikoff felt, at this moment, the insufficiency of his own power to command; felt that he must obey, and left the apartment for his own boudoir, overwhelmed with affliction; he then hastily summoned the servants who had found her in the garden, examined the cap they had picked up, and the place where she had dropped, and came finally to the conclusion that the garden had been entered by a false key, and that the person of the empress had been the object of the robbers, as she always wore many valuable jewels, and her custom of sleeping in the gardens had been talked of by the servants. Many foreign vessels were lying in the neighbouring harbour, and among their crews might be found some who were adroit and reckless enough for such an attempt. As the cap was found within a little distance of the door, the princess in her fright might fly towards it, and probably be pushed rudely back, and much injured by her fall; that one of her hands was cut against the stone was evident.

This solution of the mystery seemed so likely to be the truth, that all who heard accepted it as such; and since nothing had been taken from the person of the princess, and vessels were getting out every day, little inquiry took place in a pursuit which seemed hopeless. Indeed, Menzikoff soon became so extremely alarmed for his daughter, and so entirely absorbed in her, that his grief suspended, if it did not conquer, his vengeance. Still the same words kept issuing from her lips, accompanying deep moans, which seemed rather of sorrow than of pain; when it was remarked by some that it was strange she should seem to lament the drowning of a wretch who had terrified her; others would answer, "it was quite natural to one who had all her life been kind to every one, and would not injure the worm that crawled in her footpath."

The continuance of her daughter's illness soon compelled the princess to keep her own couch, in the helplessness of weakness and solicitude; and Menzikoff, fully aware of the injustice of his first surmises, and recalled to natural feelings and the promptings of his better nature, which, though injured, was not extinguished by ambition, soothed her distress by literally devoting

himself to the care of his daughter. She had from the first evidently known him, and in a short time she appeared to desire his presence; and though the same mournful words, "he is drowned," were those she adopted on his entrance, yet others succeeded. The medicine he prepared was never refused, and the fruit he offered to her lips was often received with a grateful, though a melancholy smile. At such moments the heart of the proud man melted into the softest sorrow, and he bitterly regretted that he had ever given pain to that fair and loving creature, who was now become so fragile that she seemed ready to exhale with every breath, and unable any longer to utter those moanings by which her crushed spirit had revealed its sufferings. The father yielded full belief to the near approach of death; but the physician, on whom they most depended, gave hopes that she might yet rally, her constitution being naturally very good. "If," said he, "we could procure sleep—"

"She will sleep too soon—too long," said the bursting heart of the stricken father.

This salutary effect took place when the fever at length left her, and reason, by degrees, resumed its place; but, happily, memory came more slowly; and she was sensible that she had been very ill, and was become extremely weak, also that she had great trouble upon her mind, before she recollected what that trouble sprang from. Meanwhile, she was exempted from those injudicious questions which might have thrown her back in the first glimmerings of convalescence; and, therefore, by slow degrees she attained life and strength, to bear the sorrow's life had in store.

But youth can struggle through much, when professional skill and parental tenderness are ever on the watch to aid the glimmering spark. Mary soon became sensible of her father's exceeding kindness, that his arm raised her pillow, that his voice whispered words of comfort, and urged her to take the reviving cordial; but, alas! a terrible thought now rose upon her mind. "Surely no less a misfortune than the death of her mother could have thus softened the nature and changed the occupations of a father perpetually involved in the cares of government, or busied with the exhibitions of rank;" anxiously casting her eyes around, and then fixing them on him, she faintly articulated the words, "Have I, then, no mother?"

"Your mother is in her own apartment with her babe. Surely my Mary will not object to her father supplying her place?"

As he spoke, tears—tears of pure tenderness such as seldom gush from the eyes of man in the day of his strength—rolled down the cheeks of Menzikoff, and fell on the fair thin hands of his enfeebled child. Mary had always loved, but she also had painfully feared her father; but now, her whole soul was dissolved in grateful tenderness, and, putting out her weak arms with all the little strength she possessed, she wound them round his neck and sobbed out, "Oh! yes, you are my own dear father."

But even while she was in this affecting position, memory returned, bringing out by degrees its sad train of sorrows; the very circumstance of her father's affectionate care recalled the interview she had had with Theodore to her mind, and the terrible consequences which ensued; and it struck her that the knowledge he

had obtained of Theodore's death was the cause of her father's attention and pity. To her conception of the case, her loss was one that would have drawn sympathy from stones, and she doubted not the whole Russian empire was then mourning for the loss of their brightest ornament ; and as the dreadful remembrance and various circumstances of that terrible evening rose to her view, she burst into a fit of hysterical weeping, which seemed likely to prove fatal to one so grievously reduced.

But when her pale, shadowy mother again appeared by her couch, Mary restrained her sorrow, and submitted to her dictates with all the same dutiful affection and anxiety to relieve her that had ever marked her conduct. She was thankful to God that her late fears had been vain ; that one so unspeakably dear was still saved from the wreck ; and although she now felt an irresistible desire to throw herself on the maternal bosom, and pour her sorrowful story into those ears which were always open to her tales of trouble, yet she obeyed her injunction to remain silent, until she had more strength for speaking.

It has been observed with truth, that fierce and apparently intractable natures, when by circumstance they are melted down and own the emotions of our common humanity, are more effective in their influence than others. The lover, who is terrific to all save one, touches the heart of her, so distinguished, with the most lively interest ; and thus Menzikoff, so long proud and cold, considering his family the mere slaves to his arbitrary will, and the mere steps of his ambition, now became all kindness, and, returning to the amiable character of his early days, awoke, both in his wife and daughter, and especially the last, that full confidence and glowing gratitude which was most likely to heal her sorrows, or give her strength to endure them. She had wished for death, prayed for death, so soon as returning reason told her Theodore was no more ; she now desired rather to live for those dear parents to whom she saw her death would be a great affliction ; of other persons, and future circumstances, she thought not at all, for the nature of her trouble fully absorbed her mind, and left her no cares beyond her present overwhelming one.

After two or three days more had passed, and the medical men had pronounced her out of immediate danger, and the prince had lamented the absolute necessity he was under of seeing the empress, poor Mary, with her fond parents on either hand, recited the sad story of her interview with Theodore, together with that which she held to be the fatal result ; and in naming which all her fortitude could not avail to prevent the most dreadful agitation. The princess wept with sincere grief the loss of one she had long held in the highest regard—and Menzikoff spoke of him in the highest terms ; lamenting, only, "that the last act of his life had been an endeavour to seduce a daughter from the allegiance due to her father ; but this—*this*, my child, I will never mention or allude to again. He is gone, and be his fault washed away with the waves that roll over him—"

" We know not yet that he is lost," said the princess, hastily. " Theodore Dolgourouki, the heir of the highest family in Russia, is not a man to vanish from the face of the earth, and no note be taken of it ; nor was he a man to make

enemies, and tempt assassination. He was averse to politics, he had left the army, and about Pozeck he was adored for his charity and munificence."

" He is undoubtedly dead, nevertheless," said Menzikoff, firmly, and almost angrily, " and it would be cruel to awaken doubts on the subject. As yet, his friends, of course, believe him to be in Germany, and a considerable time may elapse before they are informed, if, indeed, they ever are, in what manner he came by his death ; better, far better, that they should never know : better for them, and certainly far better for me."

" For you, Alexander ?—you were with the empress at—"

" Do you not see that, however innocent, the Dolgouroukii would find but too much right to suspect me ? This unhappy young man is dragged from my garden, it will be said, by my people, who suffocate him in the very presence of my daughter, and plunge him into the sea that washes my walls. He had no enemies, you say. True, none but myself ; and though my inmost soul would abhor the treachery, and shudder at the performance of such an act, the Dolgourouki, as you must know, would not hesitate to charge me with it. They will be deeply afflicted, not the less so because Theodore differed from them and shared not their ambition. Death is a great reconciler—they will now extol his virtues, lament his loss, and, of course, seek justice on his destroyers. The distress and difficulty which surround me are inconceivable ; my innocence is known to God, but can never be made clear to man. So strongly do circumstances appear against me, that I question if Brukenthal, who has known me from my cradle, would not suspect me ; combining this dreadful catastrophe with the sentiments I have lately expressed on this unhappy subject."

Bitterly did the princess lament that ever she had given the slightest encouragement to the excellent young man so prematurely cut off by enemies utterly unknown, and how never likely to be discovered, since nearly a month had elapsed since the murder took place. She was grieved to the heart for her husband, and the probable injury his name would sustain, when the friends of the prince should report the manner and the place of his death ; and she eagerly promised, for herself and Mary, that positive silence which could alone save him from conjectures fatal to his reputation. The mourning and bewildered daughter had wished to see Sapicha, and talk with him on the subject, not doubting but he would raise heaven and earth to discover the destroyer of his friend ; but she saw it was her duty to be silent. It was everywhere reported, in consequence of the assertion of the servants, that the gardens had been entered, and the Princess Mary almost frightened to death ; and the accounts of the physicians coincided with such report ; but beyond that room, the splash of the falling body had been never mentioned, save by poor Mary in her ravings, which comprised all possible horrors, though drowning was certainly the principal.

As it was every way desirable to Menzikoff to give this affair the appearance of an attempt to rob the empress, and as he did really know the person who had surreptitiously entered his garden was from a foreign vessel, he immediately issued orders for a strict surveillance of all craft whatsoever in the port of Cronstadt, and

made many regulations of so strict a nature as to have been, from that time to this, the source of delay and vexation to all foreign visitants to Russia, but which were, at the time, highly satisfactory to the inhabitants. The grand-duke was particularly satisfied with them, for he had already high notions on the sacredness of his own person, and could scarcely believe that he had not been in some kind of personal danger, fame having, of course, magnified the irruption of two men into many, and given them black faces, terrible oaths, and instruments of the most deadly description.

As a farther safeguard, Menzikoff requested from all his friends silence to his daughter on the subject of her late alarm, whenever she should be again able to mix in society, saying it was the especial desire of the medical men, in order to save her from relapse, as her nerves had received a shock which might take years to restore. As nearly all his late visitants had remarked the changing complexion, and sometimes ill-suppressed sighs of the Princess Mary, and knew that she had been a close and anxious attendant on her mother, and was, in fact, far from well when it took place, this account seemed perfectly natural, and no person could be so unreasonable as not to promise strict attention to the injunction.

The Princess Menzikoff soon perceived that, when symptoms of returning strength reanimated his daughter's frame, her father rejoiced in that removal of the young prince which facilitated his project; and, although he would now allow his merits, and listen without reproof to her candid opinion on the subject of his eligibility as a son-in-law, he insisted that he was dead, with a certainty he could not possibly possess if he were innocent, and of that she had no doubt. It was, therefore, plain that, at all events, it was most desirable poor Mary should persist in the sad belief that, "until the sea gave up its dead," never more must she behold the lineaments of that form which was light to her eyes and rapture to her heart; that heart which was now full of self-reproach that she had not, at the first moment, sprang to meet his wishes, since she might then have eluded his enemies, saved his life, or shared his destruction. Such thoughts were natural to her in the first days of a sorrow so terrible and overwhelming; but did not, therefore, render her insensible to the kindness of her parents, and the caresses of that dear sister and brother, who received her as given from the dead, and by every fond endearment sought to assist her recovery and restore her spirits. However strong the attachment of young hearts, however deep their sorrows, it can only be a perverted and selfish mind, which turns coldly from the dear companions of childhood and the ties of nature to indulge them. Mary could not be happy, but she could be grateful; she could still love those who sought to enliven her, though their efforts to console her were vain, because the cause of her despondency was hidden in the recesses of her soul.

Menzikoff, notwithstanding his pride, and the general stateliness of his carriage, was a man possessing extraordinary powers of conversation, and a knowledge of men and manners, not indeed derived from books (for which he had possessed little time, though much inclination), but from actual observation. He had dwelt in many courts, travelled through many countries,

for the express purpose of examining their customs and their characters; and few persons could better amuse the passing hour with ludicrous description, or impart more entertaining information; hence his appointment to represent his sovereign when Peter the Great made the entertainments for his court, which he denied his presence. These powers he now exerted to command the attention, and sooth the spirits of his faded and still languishing daughter; but Mary had no power to engage in conversation, or listen even to any details save of those who had, like herself, been bereaved of the heart's idol. A mind so afflicted may, in its natural benevolence, be interested by the woes of others, and lured into exertion on their behalf; frivolous objects lose their power to charm, when either great designs or strong passions have seized upon the heart. We are either disgusted or insulted by anything which dares intrude on the sacred shrine devoted to cherish a worthy sorrow; and this sense of hallowed grief is felt more intensely in youth than maturity, for those who are only entering on life have seen little of the transitory nature of all earthly things; are more single-minded and pure; have less attachment to the world, but more to the few dear individuals that constitute their own world.

While engaged in his present tender offices, Menzikoff became sensible of a kind of calm, domestic happiness, of which he had not believed himself capable, and which increased so much, that, when called to the counsels of the sovereign, or, rather, when necessitated to perform her duties, he obeyed with constrained demeanour, and a heart that lagged behind. The good-natured empress pitied rather than resented the chagrin he evidently felt; told her own tale of symptoms, and inquired after those of Mary with the utmost solicitude. When the time at length arrived that he could say Mary was capable of taking an airing, she professed a desire of naming an early day for the betrothal of the invalid to the archduke.

For once in his life Menzikoff felt apalled by the fulfilment of his own ambitious views; how could he urge Mary to do that which might again reduce her to the state in which he had so lately seen her? Yet, when he looked at the empress, he felt that there was no time to lose; for, should she die before this contract was made, the wayward and sickly boy might either refuse to fulfil it, or, in fact, be unable; and, should he too die, the Duke of Holstein would instantly and justly seize the throne for his wife. On the contrary, should he live long enough to bring Mary forward as his empress, her beauty, virtue, and talents would do the rest. Once on the throne, she would hold her place for life; and his own power was established beyond the power of faction: his old passion rekindled as the view returned.

"Your majesty's will," he replied, "must be our law. Although the betrothal, according to all Russian forms, is a solemn ceremony, it is not a long one, therefore my daughter may be able to go through it in another week. The prince himself is very delicate, and your majesty's health (which is the most important point for consideration) seems to preclude all festivities on the occasion."

"I do not intend to trouble myself with any, but I wish to have your daughter near my per-

son. I have arranged all things necessary for state and convenience suitable for a grand-duchess; the change will amuse her, and to me she will be a great consolation."

Thus was the field won, the prize ensured, for which pride had so long toiled, and servility insidiously catered; yet was the brow of the conqueror cloudy; and, although his daughter received him with an assurance that she was better, he quitted her presence as if stung with conscious shame, and hastened to seek counsel from his wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

To the great relief of the anxious father, the princess appeared less shocked by his information than he expected, and undertook to speak of it to their daughter, without saying more on the subject than to request that she might break it to Mary in her own manner, and at the time when she saw her best able to bear it, to which he readily assented. The anxious mother had observed with sincere joy and heartfelt satisfaction the increased love of Mary for her father; and she thought that gratitude towards him, joined to the affection she had felt, from her cradle, for the gentle empress, would render her less averse to a marriage which was likely to benefit her whole family than the prince expected, because he could not conceive the extent of her love for them, and how entirely her nature was devoid of selfishness. Opposition in words she could not fear, since every Russian maiden of rank knew that the will of the crown was paramount in disposing of her hand; and that very circumstance had been the groundwork of her hopes for a long time, with respect to the union of her daughter with Prince Dolgorouki. At the time when he first saw and loved, he was highly in favour with the empress; Mary was fresh from the country, therefore he had no rivals; and she thought the approbation of the sovereign might be easily obtained, for she knew not of the plans of her husband, nor how closely that sovereign was beset.

Now all hope was gone by; the prince had succeeded in fully convincing Mary that Theodore was murdered, and, to his apprehension, by some foreign rival, who would, after a time, unfold his views. She saw clearly that Mary must marry a silly boy and mighty empire; and in her heart she believed that if ever woman was equal to the task of improving the one and benefiting the other, her daughter was that woman; nevertheless, she shrank from imposing the task such union assigned her. Had Sapicha been the man proposed, how different would have been her sensations! Young, handsome, generous, already beloved as a friend: in time esteem would have warmed into a softer sentiment: and, alas! who could say that when the image of Theodore had faded, that of his friend might not supply his place in the bosom of Mary? Ah! then, what would be the fate of her pure, high-minded child? suffering on the one hand—guilt on the other—what a perspective for a devoted mother, a truly virtuous and religious woman!

In truth, these sad meditations so disturbed the weakly princess, that, instead of reasoning with her daughter, she was again conveyed to her couch; and Mary, rousing herself from the languors of early convalescence, hastened to be-

come the nurse and comforter of her mother, and she, therefore, soon learned the true cause of her disorder, and also of the gloomy countenance of her father. She had endeavoured to prepare her mind for what she had lately deemed her future destination; yet still the shock was great, and inspired her with somewhat of indignation towards the empress, which, however, wore off when she remembered that she was ignorant, from first to last, of her love for Theodore, and also could not suspect his death, nor must be allowed to suspect it. Yet still, she felt that her natural feelings were not respected; and, flinging herself on her knees by the couch of her mother, she wept long and bitterly; for the father she had so loved and thanked appeared again in the light of a tyrant, and the empress in that of a weak woman, whose actions were moulded by his will. Oh! why had she returned to life and to suffering? why had they drawn her from the grave, to render existence hateful?"

From these few words, mingled with sobs which escaped, the princess read her thoughts, and, pressing her to her bosom, she said,

"Mary, you have yet a *mother*."

The weeping girl gazed upon her; and the belief that, though she was *now* a mother, the kindest and best of mothers, even that single source of comfort might not be long left to her, awoke a new vein of sorrow. Terribly as this pang was felt, it was yet useful; for when she could subdue the strong emotion under which she suffered, she saw clearly that her duty demanded a cheerful sacrifice as the only medium of her mother's health, her father's honour, and the future welfare of their young family; that, however she might despise the grandeur and loathe the connexion about to be forced upon her, yet she ought to accept them with apparent satisfaction, as the boon of those who had sought to make her happy and great. She remembered every instance of her father's late tenderness, and could not bear to forfeit similar proofs of kindness by what he might deem perverseness; and she trusted that when this last pinnacle of his ambition was attained, and his safety secured by alliance with the crown, he would return to those domestic affections and religious observances, from which the turmoil of his anxious, grasping spirit had so long estranged him.

With these conciliating thoughts were mingled others, which, though deeply affecting to a young and tender heart, and which, from time to time, drew tears from the eyes, were yet soothing in their influence. "If," said the fond mourner, "I am compelled to take a husband, surely my beloved Theodore (if, as I believe, he looks down upon me in pity) would rather I was tied to this plain and silly child than to any man about the court. Should earthly feelings be capable of pervading his pure essence, and shedding a gloom over the holy happiness of his state, my union will not disturb him, for even earthly jealousy could not be excited respecting me. No, beloved Theodore, thou dear and idolized being, for whom alone my heart could ever throb, to thee still sacred be all its warmest affections, its fondest preferences; and, in a few short years, I may be permitted to rejoin thee, and plead my unshaken constancy to a love neither death nor marriage could dissolve.—Thou canst read my heart more plainly now while on earth; thou canst see how thorny is the path I am called to tread; beseech the saints, who are thy glorious companions, to

shorten the way and support me under its troubles!"

Thus, by degrees, an ameliorated sense of her sorrowful situation crept over the heart of Mary, and, though still weak, pale, and fragile, she so struggled with herself as to meet the wishes of her father in a way most gratifying to him, and, in consequence of his favourable report, she, within the time specified by the empress, received visits from the grand-duke and the daughters of the empress. The tremour with which she spoke, the frequent changes of her complexion, and her forgetfulness, after her first thanks were tendered, of the rich presents they had brought her, might have induced older and more observant visitants to read somewhat of what was passing in her abstracted, and, indeed, wretched mind; but, happily for her, a piece of court scandal occupied them wholly. It was said that a certain nobleman, well known to them all, had discovered his eldest daughter's predilection in favour of a French merchant, and had given her, in consequence, a terrible beating. The young ones all commented much upon this incident—the youngest princess laughed, as if it were a very droll story—the eldest spoke of the father as an unfeeling brute—on which Peter declared "she talked very like a fool, for surely every man had a right to beat his own daughter."

"Your great ancestor sought to abolish such disgraceful ways of acting, my dear prince," said Menzikoff; "and I trust, as Russians become more enlightened in succeeding times, the very memory of domestic punishment of this nature will be obliterated."

"I am sure the empress, our dear mother, would wish it to be so," said the Princess Elizabeth; "she has done her best, by good example; for I don't think she ever struck you, Peter, in her life, and we all know you have often deserved it."

"Me!—what nonsense you talk!—it would have been a pretty business to strike a future emperor and a boy—beating is only fit for girls, and every Russian has a right to give his wife or daughter as much of it as he chooses."

"But your highness will allow that, in so doing, he acts neither like a gentleman nor a man," said Princess Menzikoff.

"Oh! you think it is unmanly, do you?"

"Every nation in Europe says so."

"Well, I don't say it is right, exactly; but only it makes me cross to think of old gruffy Peter making it out to be wrong: a few straps on a girl's back are very little matters compared to breaking old men on the wheel, and knouting young ones to death; and I know he has done such things many a time, for all the empress makes a fuss about him, and everybody calls him Peter the Great."

"I trust the time will come when they will call you Peter the Good," rejoined the anxious mother.

"I don't care one bit what anybody calls me when I am an emperor, because I can make them hold their tongues when I please; and I will have plenty of horses, and go a hunting whenever I choose; and perhaps I shall go to war, and kill more people than anybody; everything shall be just as I please."

"Poor Russia!" said Menzikoff, "what a prospect is thine!"

"Poor Mary! what will become of thee?" echoed silently through the heart of his wife.

A fortnight afterward the royal will was universally promulgated, and the chief officers of

the crown summoned to witness the betrothal of Mary, the daughter of Prince Menzikoff—whose long train of titles and offices were duly registered—to the grand-duke, heir of all the Russias. All who were summoned, of course, attended; but many were absent, whose high lineage gave them a prescriptive right of preference, and it may be concluded these were not backward in reprobating the whole proceeding.

The nobles of Russia might be considered at this time as of two distinct classes, and they probably remain so to the present day. The ancient nobility of long descent and vast possessions, the holders of serfs or slaves to an immense amount, and therefore, in all times of public commotion, a powerful body—and the nobles by creation, whose revenues arose from posts bestowed on them by Peter the Great, who held them by gratitude for favours granted, or by expectations it was always in the power of the sovereign to realize. Himself a man not only of energy, but genius, he was naturally attached to all whose talents could assist his views, and whose exertions in forwarding his plans evinced attachment to his person and appreciation of his motives; and in numerous cases, no doubt, he rewarded the meritorious, and deserved the thanks of his country for bringing efficient labourers into the field. But with the courage or the wisdom of these auxiliaries was blended that admixture of human frailties inseparable from all conditions; and the ambitious, the insidious, the self-seeking, and unprincipled, were necessarily interwoven with the mass. Opposed to them were the ancient nobles, too ignorant to see the value of abilities they had never felt the want of; too self-satisfied to desire the change sought by their highly-gifted emperor; and even when naturally as clever as brave, also too honest to seek, by any dereliction of principles, to curry favour with that sovereign who preferred an inferior class. The Dolgouroukis alone had stepped forward to oppose cunning by cunning, and had therefore become obnoxious to him who stood not only at the head of the *parevus*, but, after the death of the Czar, of the empire itself. The marriage of Peter the Great with Catherine had been to the old nobility very hateful; the marriage of Menzikoff's daughter to the young Peter was not less so; and those who, far removed from the seat of government, could at their ease abuse the pieman and lament the changes of the times, prophesy the ruin of the country, and secretly desire some terrible revolution which they yet dreaded, were certainly happier than the gay throng who shone in the court of the empress, and fawned on the brilliant star which had now attained its elevation; for they feared changes which might work evil for them, yet were generally discontented with their respective situations, because there were others above them. The aspiring are rarely the satisfied; and those who have been raised beyond their expectations pretty generally desire to rise beyond their merits.

Such were the high officers of state, who now attended the summons of the empress to witness how highly a subject in Russia may be elevated by marriage, and to observe the curious anomaly of a country, supposed to allow less esteem and less courtesy to woman than any other, exhibiting one woman of low birth upon the throne, and another virtually elected to fill its throne, at no great distance of time; it might also be said in sacred language, "What went ye out to see? a reed, shaken in the wind!" for such was Mary, the betrothed.

Pale, but calm, and resigned to a state she held to be inevitable, and willing to suffer for those who had suffered for her; arrayed in white satin, and glittering with jewels, the young princess appeared like a lily surcharged with dew; beautiful, yet melancholy, despite of the smile she sought to assume. The behaviour of her future lord, which was capricious, and appeared likely to become ferocious, accounted for her pensive looks to some; while others well remembered the gala evening in which she had danced with Theodore Dolgourouki, and thought her memory might haply be employed in also recalling the noble mien and animated features of that young nobleman, as forming a contrast to the little ill-favoured husband parental ambition and royal gratitude had gifted her with. Nevertheless, little pity was felt for her, not only because Russians in that day had little sentiment, but because, as the daughter of Menzikoff, she was involved in the general feeling which attached to her sire, who was hated, because he was envied, by those who yet inwardly confessed his abilities, energies, and that devotion to his country's welfare which ought to have won from all the praise of patriotism and humanity.

The princess had, on this eventful day, accompanied her daughter, from whom she expected to be separated; but found, to her relief, that the empress thought it more consistent with forms that Mary should return to her father's house for the present; and this was so welcome a permission, that it threw a gleam of sunshine on the heart, which reached the countenance, and rendered her able to receive the compliments of the courtiers with so much graceful amenity, that the grand-duke was much better pleased with her than before, and declared very roundly "that he would fetch her himself on the morrow, as her apartment was prepared, and she might as well stay at Peterhoff as at home, when she would be at hand to play with him."

The Menzikoff family returned in great state to their dwelling, where a large party assembled for the evening, to whom Ulrica did the honours, it being evident to all that both mother and daughter required retirement as a restorative. The father was indeed most anxious to afford his daughter every possible solace, for, like all other men who have given every faculty of their souls to the attainment of one object, that being secured, he felt either alarmed for its continuance, or sensible of its insufficiency for happiness. "Should Mary die before Peter," said he, "or Peter die before the empress, all my hopes will be crushed before one of them is realized."

"But yet there is another opening by which to ensure power; my son is some months older than the grand-duke, and of a far better constitution; besides, he is very handsome; if I could bring about a marriage between him and the Princess Elizabeth, all would be well. She is only two or three years older than Alexander, is very lovely, and resembles her mother in sweetness of disposition; she is fondly attached to Mary, whom Alexander resembles, and might be induced to love him for her sake."

"True! she is not the immediate heir; there are two married half-sisters nearer, whose husbands would struggle for their wives' precedence; but what have they done for Russia? tut, tut, I am on the spot, and everything here is done by *coup-de-main*. Elizabeth is the daughter of Peter the Great; daughter, also, of the Empress Catherine, whom all the Russians love. She will make an excellent empress, and I will place her on the throne of her father."

Elizabeth did indeed reign, and prove the truth of Menzikoff's prophecy—but where was the prophet then?

While such meditations, interspersed with solicitude on many points, were passing the mind of the host, he could not fail to appear in some degree abstracted and unjoyous, though long accustomed to practise that necessary habit of courts which may be termed the dissimulation of politeness. To some this appeared a desire to affect humility; others came nearer the truth in thinking that he feared his daughter would not live to become empress; but none supposed (aspiring and successful as he proved himself to be) that his plotting brain had hatched another scheme for a royal marriage, and held it possible that Catherine should consent to give her own fair daughter, whom every throne in Europe might be proud to woo and win, to a schoolboy.

CHAPTER XVII.

The following morning Mary prepared herself for her great trial, that of quitting the tender mother who still required her services; and her first duties she held to be accurate instructions to Ulrica respecting the peculiarities of her constitution, and the thousand lesser cares, whereby affection contrives to alleviate the evil it may not cure.

Now that the time was actually come for transporting to the palace-home he had so long prepared for her this jewel of his house, the father felt (as fathers ought) a mournful tenderness, a lively solicitude for the future, and a determination still to protect, so far as it was possible, the happiness and honour of his daughter. True, however, to the suggestions of his ambition, as awakened the preceding evening, he determined to form a more intimate acquaintance with his son than his busy life had ever yet permitted; therefore, he called him from his studies to walk with him on the ramparts, as he wished to explain to him the nature of those regulations he had lately been making for the port of Cronstadt.

Like all boys of his age, Alexander was proud of his father's notice, but, at the same time, his heart lingered with that beloved sister from whom he was soon to part; and he felt her removal the more, because he could not help disliking, and somewhat despising, her future husband. He was, at this time, much too closely engaged with classic history to be "ravished with the whistling of a name, whether Czar or Caesar," and was little likely to be deemed other than a romantic boy, blind to his own interest, had they entered upon the subject now uppermost in the ever-tolling busy brain of the father.

They looked forth on the waters of the gulf, which flowed calmly before them, bearing towards the capital various vessels laden with provisions and merchandise, which kept near the middle of the stream; but there was one fisherman's boat immediately below, the owner of which looked towards him with an earnestness which struck Menzikoff as singular, and recalled to his mind that when he last went to Cronstadt, the same man, or one resembling him, had thus gazed both as he went and returned. "Do you know that man, my dear?" said he to his son.

"Certainly, papa; it is Peter Bichoff, the fish-

erman who supplies the palace—at least, used to do. We have not seen old Peter, or his partner Alexis, of late."

Menzikoff now remembered distinctly having himself spoken to this man when the empress was at Oranienbaum, and he concluded that he was looking to him for reward; but his mind misgave him: events of a dreadful nature had passed since then; and, telling Alexander he had better return to the palace and spend his time with his sister, he passed down to the water-side, and hastily addressed the man with that tone of affable kindness which he generally adopted to his soldiers, but rarely to his domestic servants.

"Well, Peter, have you been lucky of late?"

"I have had little luck with fishing, your highness, and plenty of trouble to boot; but, in catching the enemy you were afraid of, and who would, for certain, have murdered the empress (whom God preserve!), I have surely caught that which will make a poor fisherman for life. Day after day, week after week, have I waited to see your highness."

"I remember telling you and your partner to have an eye to the postern-gate, and keep the crews of vessels from making any noise to disturb the empress when she was taking repose in the garden; but I know not to what you allude."

The fisherman, then, with all the circumlocution of his class, and also with much of the trepidation a man feels who is by no means sure that he has done right, however right he might be in his intentions, proceeded to inform the prince that, "being extremely vigilant on account of the orders he had received, he had, three successive evenings, perceived a small boat plying under the walls, containing two men and a boy, and which, on the second night, he saw return to a vessel (he thought a Dantzicker) which lay in the gulf opposite Cronstadt. On the third evening, one of the men landed and approached the gate, when himself and partner were at a considerable distance, and could only see that the person entered, without knowing whether it was opened to him from within, or whether he possessed a key. When he had entered, the boat pushed off, but lay to close within shore; on seeing which, Alexander and myself were certain harm was meant; so we lost no time in plying our oars, and soon reached the very spot from whence he had sprung. God help us! we thought it high luck, and supposed it would be the making of us."

"What followed?" cried Menzikoff, impatiently.

"We consulted together for a short time, and concluded it was, by all means, right to take the traitor alive, and to go quickly, lest his friends, who, most likely, were well armed, should join him to murder the empress: so, taking up a new sail which we had just bought, we went softly into the garden, and there we saw just beyond the belt of trees this very man palavering with a damsel of the palace."

"Damsel of the palace" somewhat offended Menzikoff's ear, and he bade him "go on" in an imperative tone, not likely to forward the story; and Peter Bichoff assured his highness, very obsequiously, that they determined to catch the murderer without hurting him, "not so much because of the reward they expected, as that he should be brought alive and hearty to the torture, as he ought to be."

"But what did you do with him, my good fellow?" said the prince, in a milder tone, and by no means without a throbbing heart.

"We came behind him very cautiously, threw the sail right over his head and arms, and one grappled him round the legs, while the other seized him by the shoulders; but he was mighty obstreperous; and, stout as we both are, it was all we could possibly do to bring him into the boat, when I thought it right just to see what we had got, and so I unfolded the sail; and, if your highness will believe me, he was a regular conspirator, with a fisherman's clothes put over his own, which showed his treason quite plainly; so I said we would bind him, and put him in the new prison; but he started up, and swore he would never be taken there; and, seizing Alexander's dirk, gave him a severe wound, on which I ran my own weapon right through his body. What could I do, your highness? I was left alone, as it were, and should have been murdered on the instant."

"Was he killed?" said the prince, in a faltering voice.

"It was all the work of a single moment; doubtless he was mortally wounded, but by a terrible effort he sprang into the water; and, after swimming a few yards, his own boat, which had seen something of the scuffle, received him, the boy giving a shriek when he saw him, that rings in my ears ever since."

"Did you not pursue the boat?"

"They had firearms; besides, poor Alexander was bleeding, as I thought, to death; and, indeed, he has never done a day's work since; night also had fallen upon us, and I neither knew what to do for my comrade, nor how to account for his state. I thought I had done right, but still I was bewildered. All I have to say more is, that when the sun rose next morning, that Dantzic vessel was gone."

"The empress departed the very day in question, therefore you could not save her life; you have taken that of a fellow-creature for no purpose."

"We were out the whole day, and had been very successful, so we knew not of her majesty's departure. Besides, it was life for life, for the man wouldn't yield; and, seeing he was a disguised gentleman, no wonder he struggled so. Oh! had we secured him, what a reward should we have had from the empress!—but surely your highness is the same; it was your bidding we obeyed."

"You have murdered a man, and you ask a reward! Would you have hanging, or the knout?"

"I have told your highness the truth, as poor Alex's wound testifies; what I did was in obedience to your commands. I had no ill-will to the man, who was young and well-favoured, and might have been one of the highest in the land, from his bearing. I am your slave; I complain not; what I did was in the service of my lord. I may not have recompense, but your highness is not wont to punish those who are vigilant and honest."

Menzikoff felt extremely uneasy; he might, to suit his own purposes, have desired the absence, or even death, of Theodore; but yet, he could not remember him without admiring his excellent qualities, and honouring those virtues in him which he was conscious of being deficient in his own character. His youth, beauty, and courage; his becoming a victim to his love for his own darling daughter, were all claimants on his pity and regard; but care for himself soon superseded sorrow for Theodore. He looked on the stalwart arm of him who had dealt the death-blow, and could not doubt that it was

fatal; but it was plain that the splash heard by Mary was his own plunge, and that he had lived to be received by his friend, the young German baron. If even he died without the power of explaining the mode of his murder, would not the young German conceive it, and believe that he had employed an assassin?—would he not reveal the sad story, in all its horrors, to the Dolgourouki, who would consider its truth confirmed by the long-sufferings and the succeeding marriage of his daughter to the heir of the empire? The latest accounts from Theodore's father spoke of an advantageous settlement with Persia, though not a brilliant victory, and he was now, probably, returning. What must be his emotions on hearing of such a catastrophe?

Time was that the misery of this unhappy father would have afforded all the pleasures of vengeance to Menzikoff; but now he felt that they had at least one point of union—the same circumstance caused them to be wretched.

Yet the words, "had the fools consigned him to the deep while he was still smothered in the sailcloth," rose continually to his mind—the wishes of the murderous hand, mingled with the selfish fears which all who are not utterly and irretrievably abandoned feel for their reputation, blended also with the improbable supposition that Theodore himself might one day rise from the sick-bed, which should have been a grave, to reproach him, render his daughter a maniac, and his wife a corpse. Would not his sovereign reproach him, her people loathe him, the old nobility rejoice at his exposure, the new unite to disgrace him, that they might rise on his ruin, and fatten on his confiscated wealth; while the courts of Europe, remembering his splendour, and detesting the exercise of those talents, which, by turns, had held them in thrall, would rejoice in the humiliation of that country he had sought to raise above them all.

Such were the thoughts, the fears, the agonizing apprehensions, which rent the heart of Menzikoff, the very day after he had completed the desire of his soul for many a doubting, anxious year; and such will ever be the results of an ambitious, grasping, avaricious spirit, which has suffered the nobler wishes of a truly patriotic mind to dwindle into the narrow desires of selfish aggrandizement. Such is the weakness of human nature, that but a hair divides the nobler and truly virtuous intention from the grovelling instinct which runs along with it, until by some especial temptation it gets the start, and precedes it even to the grave.

Poor Peter watched the troubled countenance of the prince, and clearly perceived that he had done wrong, and that his chance for recompence was too likely to be commuted for punishment; and he was casting about in his mind how he could withdraw from the observation of that arbiter of his earthly destiny whom he had long sought to attract, when Menzikoff, starting from his painful reverie, put a few roubles in his hand, telling him to take care of Alexis, and look to the well-known charity of the princess in his time of distress during winter, saying, impressively, "that he must never mention this unfortunate affair to any human being, save at his own command;" and adding, "since you supposed that you did service to the empress, and acted according to my command, I am willing to overlook it, but the civil authorities will not."

At this very moment the heart of Menzikoff yearned to bestow a meed which should release this really industrious man from the poverty which pressed upon him, and was unquestion-

ably, from his late loss of time, likely to be severely felt during the winter now commencing. He dared not do this, lest it should hereafter be adduced as a proof of his guilty participation in the death of Theodore—a charge that he felt to hang over his head like the sword of the tyrant suspended by a single hair, although he was unquestionably as innocent in this unhappy affair as he was guilty in others; for several persons, from very slight causes, had been condemned by him, or, rather, by his intriguing spirit, to the deserts, and even the mines of Siberia, to expiate, by a daily death of torture, an idle jest, or an honest invective against the ruler of Russia, or the empress who aggrandized him.

With a lingering foot and downcast eyes, this pampered child of fortune returned to his splendid palace, conscious that a barb was lacerating his heart, which it was utterly impossible for him to extract or even reveal, and fearing that even his well-practised art could not wholly chase from his countenance the painful sensations that were rankling within. He was, however, compelled to try (happy in that some excuse for sorrow existed in parting with his daughter); for the Prince Peter had arrived, and the household were in the bustle of preparation for her departure, many lamenting the loss of one so beloved, and not any rejoicing, as the grand-duke expected, in the glorious destiny ensured to her by a union with the future emperor.

Two of the princesses, Anna and Elizabeth, had accompanied the cavalcade, and were most amiably attentive to the Princess Menzikoff, whom they loved and pitied, as about to sustain an irreparable personal loss in her daughter. Menzikoff, never losing sight of any plan for the future, which was formed however crudely by a mind so imbued and incrusted by ambition, roused himself to show particular attention to the younger, and caused Alexander to wait upon her with all that could tempt the palate or amuse the sight, though mortified to see how little his simple-hearted though sensible son had the manners of the courtier. This deficiency he determined to amend, and considered that there might be time for it before any positive steps could be taken; but he started, as if his scheme had been discovered, when the young princess observed "that she did not wonder Mary could not forbear to weep—it was a sad thing to leave good parents and dear sisters—she, herself, would never marry."

"You would marry soon enough, if it would make you an empress," said Peter, indignantly.

"I would not marry a boy to be an empress ten times over; and if, by any chance, I were placed on the throne, I would have no other husband than my people."

"But you have no chance—no chance whatever—neither you nor Anna."

"We have all the chance either of us desire; reigning is a burdensome honour."

"Yes: men only ought to reign, I know that: 'in some countries,' my tutor says, 'they never let women reign at all,' and I intend it shall be so in Russia. They call it a Salique law, and I will make it here; old Kate shall be the very last woman that sits on the throne of Muscovy. Prince Menzikoff, remember what I tell you."

The prince smiled and bowed: at that very moment his eye was on two fair females whom he thought equally fitted for that imperial seat, and two future empresses were indeed before

him, who lived to prove themselves far more fitted for their high office than the young bridegroom; but the superior qualities of the next empress have placed their memories in the shade. A more unfortunate prophetic threat was never uttered; nevertheless, it had an effect on the mind of Menzikoff far from agreeable, and set his faculties busily at work to counteract the grand-duke's schemes for the future, if schemes he could be said to have, whose words were a repetition of the last he had caught from another, and whose intentions varied with the whim of the moment. Such a political opponent was not likely to give much trouble to the long-headed, experienced minister; nevertheless, unlimited power is a terrific engine, and difficult to direct, even when held by imbecile hands that look to others for assistance.

The awful moment arrived that tore poor Mary from her idolized mother, her beloved family—but her sacrifice was made; she had wound up her mind to endurance; and though, at this moment, it somewhat revolted from that father she had loved so fondly, yet, when she beheld his troubled countenance, and remem-bered that he would never cease to be her support, to him also she accorded not only duty, but affection. Little did she know that the image of her own Theodore was uppermost on this eventful morning, as much in his heart as her own, and happy it was for her that she was ignorant of those harrowing details which had met his ear, and left deep on his mind as to the present existence of her lover.

It was the utter hopelessness of her case that rendered it endurable, by directing her mind to heaven as the medium of future reunion with him, and teaching her humble submission to God, and active benevolence to her fellow-creatures, as the path appointed to her bereaved spirit on earth, and which would not fail to conduct her to heaven. She omitted no ceremonies held to be sacred in her very ceremonious church; for crossings, fastings, and frequent repetition of prayers were a relief from the broodings of a morbid imagination; but her mother had imbibed from Bruenthal, many years before, the doctrines of a more enlightened era, and Mary had learned to worship in spirit and in truth, and to substitute pure Christianity for imbecile observances, though she made no pretences to higher knowledge than those around her, and could frequently find comfort in adopting usages which were the habits of her childhood and her country, and were at least symbols of better things.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Mary arrived at the palace of Peterhoff, which was a favourite abode with the empress, although at that time small and inconvenient, she was struck more than on the preceding day with the enlargement* of her person and her extreme debility. She soon became sensible that the ceremony of betrothalment, and her own early removal to the palace, were in consequence of the royal invalid's desiring the assistance of one to whose abilities, as a nurse, she attached a kind of supernatural value, in consequence of her mother's recovery from a state of great danger. To enter on any charge likely to produce good to any human being Mary

could never have objected, for kindness was a part of her very nature; and she was not only grateful to the empress for her munificence to her father, but loved her for her merciful disposition and happy equanimity of temper.

Although it was evident that the sufferer's case admitted of nothing beyond temporary alleviation, it was admitted by all, that for a time the dreaded stroke was averted by the unceasing care and affectionate watchfulness of the young grand-duchess, who obtained the power of inducing the empress not only to forego her favourite wine and confections, but repent that she had ever indulged in habits inimical to her health. So much better did she at one time appear, that her physicians ventured to predict her return to health; and her daughters, with the happy facility of youth which always hopes for that it ardently desires, became fondly attached to Mary as the cause of her amendment. If a patience which never wearies, a temper "that can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day," and that close observation of symptoms and changes so necessary for information to medical advisers, could make so young a woman (what every woman should be) an efficient nurse, we cannot doubt the utility of our gentle Mary, since her understanding was happily not inferior to her tenderness.

Whenever amendment was announced, or the return of disease evinced in a case continually fluctuating, all the machinery of intrigue became instantly afloat in the court. Some were rejoicing in the return of their generous mistress to her station, others lamenting that the time had not arrived for humbling Menzikoff, many balancing the probability of his fall with the fascinations of his daughter, who might prevent it, or even increase his greatness and stability; all were busy and anxious to secure aggrandizement, or ensure the place they held.

It was whispered that the heir of the crown did not receive Menzikoff as he was wont, being generally engaged; all the time they were together, in complaining of the absence of the grand-duchess, whom he wanted to amuse him, or to teach him something, but who shut herself up with the empress. The prince, in reply, admitted that it was hard upon him, and took all possible pains to assist his amusements, as well as reason with him on the duty all owed to the empress, and tried to excite pity for sufferings in which his own ill health enabled him to sympathize. As Menzikoff had been considered the finest figure in Russia on horseback, and the most perfect master of the *ménage*, if Peter was inclined to take a lesson in riding from him, in general his good-humour would return; but, since he was really unequal to any exertion, and suffered spitting of blood in consequence of it when the rides were cut short from a proper attention to his health, he considered himself ill-used, and improperly treated, and hastened to vent reproaches both on father and daughter.

The empress, notwithstanding her increasing infirmities, sought to sooth all asperities in so far as they were revealed to her; and, conscious of the dulness of her court, whenever she found her health a little better, exerted herself to share or invent some amusement for her family circle. A little time before the death of Peter the Great, he had added to the many benefits conferred on his country that of founding an acad-

* Her complaint was dropsy.

emy, which was modelled on the plan of the Royal Society in London, and the academy in France, and to which he had, by noble endowments, drawn men of literature from various countries. This, the latest of his institutions, had, ever since her widowhood, been the especial care of Catherine ; and it had been opened, the preceding year, with great *éclat*, by a splendid lecture on the utility of the sciences, and an *éloge* on the munificent founder ; and the anniversary now approaching, the empress determined to add her presence and that of all the royal family now resident in Petersburgh to its support and honour ; but, previously to her appearance, thus publicly, as a member of her august house, wished the marriage ceremony of Mary and the grand-duke to be completed. This proposition was received gladly by Menzikoff ; but his daughter's change of complexion and look of dismay evinced her inward agitation and repugnance, though she remained perfectly silent. The empress looked scrutinizingly, and severely upon the father, saying, "Mary's heart is a very good heart, but I fear it is not, as you informed me, a disengaged one. I trust, in time, she will be able to turn it to Peter ; between thirteen and sixteen he will improve materially ; and she, too, may conquer any childish fancy : that some such has affected her I cannot doubt ; she has struggled with some secret grief ever since she came among us."

Menzikoff durst not trust himself with reply, for he had also a secret grief closely connected with his daughter's, and lived in daily fear of some discovery inimical to his name, and likely to subvert his prosperity. The empress saw clearly that she had spoken the truth ; and, pursuing the subject, she recollects the meeting with Theodore Dolgourouki, who had so strangely (to her conception) disappeared from the court he was so fitted to grace, and since then requested permission to travel. Doubtless, poor Mary, then scarcely fifteen, had suffered herself to be caught by his attractions, a weakness to which she had herself contributed on that eventful night when all were so much exhilarated ; as, however, she had never seen him since (so far as the empress knew), and years might pass before his return (the general leave of absence being five to those noblemen who desired to travel), there appeared no reason for evading the conclusion of the marriage, and placing Mary before the public as the future empress.

It is probable that this amiable woman never entertained love, as an impassioned preference, for any man. Her marriage with the young soldier, whom she lost on the same morning, was the result of her forlorn situation in extreme youth ; and the good priest, whose servant she was, could scarcely fail to desire such a protector to one so beautiful in such a time of trouble. When she became the choice of the Czar, it must be evident there was no choice for herself : that the high state to which he raised her, the luxuries he lavished on her, and all that she beheld of his magnificent designs and wonderful qualities, won her esteem and admiration, we cannot doubt ; and her own power over him in soothing his violence, purifying his passions, and exalting all the higher parts of his strangely-mingled nature, would unquestionably excite her affections. That she both loved and honoured his memory there can be no doubt, since she proved it by every action of her life ; but

love, as it is generally felt in woman's heart—fond, trustful, tender, constant, self-renouncing love—was not among the ingredients of her strange, eventful history. The idle tales of her early *liaison* with Menzikoff defeat themselves ; for the protection his house afforded her was accorded by his wife, then a beautiful, newly-married, and idolized bride, to whom General Bauer, with a delicacy which ought to be recorded to his honour, consigned her, because, being a bachelor, she could not be properly placed under his roof.

"We shall have my Persian general, Prince Labitesh Dolgourouki, home soon. He has been now a good while employed as a negotiator with Persia, for he could not carry his war on by a *coup de main*, like his son Theodore," said the empress to Mary.

The burning blushes that rose on the name of Theodore, and as quickly subsided into more than marily paleness, confirmed the suspicion of the empress ; but it so far moved her compassion that she ever afterward avoided naming him, and became the more intent to give either amusement or employment to the dear girl who was, every day, more valuable in her sight ; but, at the same time, the father declined in her estimation. Mary was inwardly convinced that her tender predilection was discovered and pitied, yet, in some sort, held to be a folly ; and her heart overflowed with gratitude towards one who could treat her wounded spirit with so much lenity, and often did she ardently desire to throw herself at the feet of her royal mistress and compassionate friend, and at once confess her love, her sorrow, and the death of him who could never be an object of jealousy to her future husband ; but this she could not do for her father's sake ; and her perception of the empress's vexation towards him awakened, to the utmost, her desire to restore him to confidence by all that seemed possible on her part—a cheerful acquiescence and grateful sense of the honours awaiting her. "May I be enabled," said she, "to make my sacrifice complete !—since I cannot live for Theodore, may I live for my family and for my duties !—In seeking the happiness of others, in entering on a state which will enable me to make many hearts happy, my own may find peace, though it has lost felicity."

Pursuant to these sentiments, and really possessing a taste for the fine arts, and a perception of scientific pursuits far superior to her age, Mary now entered with apparent ardour into the plans of the empress for a splendid exhibition at the academy ; and even bore, without shrinking, the preparations for solemnising the second ceremony for tying her to Peter ; at the same time, she redoubled her attention to the royal invalid, in order to enable her to encounter the fatigues in prospect.

At this time the empress was much diminished, and so much younger-looking than she had been for the last three or four years, that she submitted to the labours of the toilet in a manner she had never done since the death of the emperor. Her skin was delicately fair, and her hair flaxen ; but, as her eyes were of the darkest hazel, she had been accustomed to have her hair and eyebrows dyed black, which enhanced the lustre of her complexion and the brilliancy of her eyes. Rouge had not yet become general in the Russian court, though it has since then become notoriously so ; nor would Peter the

Great have authorized it ; but Catherine, willing to efface from her subjects the idea of sickness, now used it sparingly, and, gorgeously ornamented with diamonds over a dress of green velvet, trimmed with point lace, worked in the convent she most patronised, appeared before her court, and afterward more publicly, the same beautiful woman and benevolent sovereign all had known her years before as the wife of the Czar. The people rejoiced that her power was perpetuated and increased in a manner they had never done before, as the completion of the academy was her own work, and awoke their memory to her munificence, not less than to a recollection of her mercy and humanity. As her carriage moved slowly onward, shouts of joy, mingled with words of congratulation and prayers for her life, rent the heavens and affected her exceedingly, tears mingled with the smiles and blessings she tried to utter. Mary, alarmed for the consequences of this trial to her strength, by every tender assiduity sought to sustain her ; and, as it was generally thought, her cares had thus restored their "beloved mother" to her people, she, too, experienced the loud plaudits of a people awakened to enthusiasm, and of course the grand-duke came in for his share, to his great delight. He was proud of Mary's beauty, and delighted with the attention and applause she received, and had never appeared so amiable and interesting in the eyes of his future subjects as on this eventful day, which was in every respect joyous and satisfactory, save in its effects on the empress.

The consequence of her fatigue and agitation did not, however, immediately appear, and her spirits seemed cheered and soothed by the apparent improvement of the young prince, who, connecting the *vivas* of the day with the learning of the academy, professed an intention to become very studious, and to attain the knowledge called for by his situation as the heir apparent. No plan could be more calculated for inspiring him with due esteem and affection for his consort than this, for Mary was well able to instruct him, and the sweetness of her temper was calculated to ameliorate the weariness of study, and excite the emotions of gratitude ; but the scheme devised for improvement, and entered on with avidity, was suddenly suspended by the return of the empress's disorder, which speedily assumed a form that baffled all the powers of medicine.

At this awful juncture, Mary again entered on every kindly office with the tenderness of a ministering angel, but her attendance was now called upon to sooth and cheer the departing spirit, rather than to aid the suffering and sinking frame. The archbishop and other ministers of the Greek Church frequently prayed with the empress, and she adopted (without therefore relying on their efficacy for salvation) all those forms which constitute its ceremonies ; but she had, in very early life, been imbued with doctrines of a simpler and more efficacious faith ; and happy was she to find that, from the lessons of Brukenthal, her youngest but best instructed friend comprehended the higher views of Christianity, and without turning disdainfully from what many term "the mummeries of the priesthood," yet looked to the word of God, and the great sacrifice which that word reveals, as the sure medium of salvation and the source of hope to the departing soul. Sacred and happy, though

mournful, were the readings, the conversations, and the broken yet heartfelt prayers, which relieved the wearisome nights of the sufferer, who, to the last, retained her faculties, received her ministers, instructed the heir of her empire, and consoled her own dear daughters. These princesses, and those of the emperor by his former wife, together with his nieces, were alike anxious to prove their love and watchfulness over her ; but, perceiving how much more efficient were the attentions of her who had been so long accustomed to the cares of a daughter, they left the charge to Mary, confiding in her skill, and thankful for her exertion and affection.

One day, when her pain had subsided, and in consequence she felt a temporary relief, she desired to see all of her relations who were then within the walls of the palace ; and, causing herself to be raised in the bed, she laid her head on the shoulders of Mary, who sat upon the couch, and addressed them as they arrived with the kind and sweet voice which was peculiar to her. She then adverted to the many changes of her eventful life ; she observed that the highest station exempted no one from the general lot of humanity ; that none could bear the pains of death for another ; and that it was of little consequence to her, at that moment, whether she were a servant in Marieburg, or an empress in St. Petersburg : her only source of hope now lay in being an humble Christian.*

In a few short moments her smile faded, but the countenance remained calm, and a faint sigh only told that the spirit had departed.

CHAPTER XIX.

ONLY two years had elapsed since the de ceased empress had succeeded to that most glorious but most responsible of all earthly situations, the absolute sovereignty of the greatest nation, or, rather, assemblage of nations in the world. Little gifted for such a situation, and, apparently, devoid of the ambition which would have led her to seek it, we can hardly doubt that she was stimulated by Menzikoff to desire it, or led to believe that, unless she obtained power, she would sink into poverty and obscurity ; that no medium state would enable her to retain the comforts she desired without ensuring the splendours of a throne.

Every view of her character proves, however, that selfish anxieties had little to do with her acceptance of the throne ; for there is every reason to believe, that the good of the people was, indeed, her great object, together with the desire to forward the especial views of the great man to whom she had been allied ; nor can we doubt that, if her life had been spared until his grandson had attained manhood, she would have resigned with pleasure the crown for which she had little desire, since she would, by that means, have dispensed with the business for which she had a positive aversion.

That Menzikoff apprehended such an event, we cannot doubt, from his anxiety to strengthen his own power by his daughter's marriage with a sickly child like Peter II., since it appeared the only means of prolonging his administration of the affairs of Russia, which he undoubtedly intended to hold in his hands whether Peter or

his wife were on the throne. However we may blame his ambition, it must be allowed that he sought to perpetuate the designs of his great master, and the welfare of the country which he loved.

On the present occasion, not one dissentient voice was heard on the subject of the succession; for the heir of the empire was unquestionably the grandson of Peter, who was immediately proclaimed by Menzikoff in the most pompous and emphatic manner any precedent allowed, good care being taken to link the name of the empress with that of the emperor. This ceremony over, his next care was to make the most magnificent arrangements for the funeral, which took place in the usual manner, under the immediate control of the favourite minister.

Meantime, the young princesses, and all of the household who had ever attended the late empress in person, were drowned in sorrow. They had lost a most tender mother and beneficent mistress, whose pure kindness of heart and integrity of intention, informed by a sound understanding, had compensated to them for shining talents and elegant accomplishments. Nor was the grief without the palace much inferior to that within; wherever there was a tear to wipe, or a mouth to feed, the kindness of the empress had sufficed for help; she abolished torture, which had heretofore existed in its most hateful and horrible forms; she examined the cases of the condemned, and, where it was possible to extend pardon, consistent with the general safety of the community, never failed to do so, and, by her vigilant inquiries, abated the nuisance of bribery, and purified the courts of justice. Quietly labouring to promote the gigantic views of the mighty reformer whom she succeeded, she expedited beneficial changes without wounding the prejudices of those she desired to improve, and thus offered an example to her own sex of proceeding safely and surely, meekly yet perseveringly, to the attainment of a virtuous object.

Catherine, even in her short reign, had effected so much good, that no one questioned its value to Russia, and its still greater value to the present youthful sovereign; nor did any reasonable man deny the efficient services of that minister who had been both hands and eyes to Peter the Great, and everything to his successor. The merchants, artists, and artisans especially praised him: the army (now at rest) ascribed their efficiency to his regulations; nor were the navy less friendly: but the ancient lords of the soil, and their dependant serfs, derided the qualities they could not comprehend, despised the splendour they could not imitate, yet naturally envied, and clung more than ever to the prejudice in favour of high birth, because it offered a flaw in the proud upstart's escutcheon, which neither time nor merit could efface.

When due honours had been paid to the memory of the departed, it was expected that a court, headed by such youthful sovereigns, would be unusually gay; but the emperor's necessary exertions had enfeebled him, and for some weeks he was a regular invalid; but his disposition evidently softened; and the unrestrained attentions of his gentle wife, and her endeavours to amuse him, awoke his affection, and his mind and temper alike evinced improvement.

The arrival of Ivan Dolgourouki from Persia (with whom he had settled a peace advanta-

geous to Russia) aroused the spirits of the emperor, and depressed those of his trembling wife, who, above all things, dreaded the arrival of Theodore's father. From this trouble she was soon relieved, as Prince Lubitsch had been wounded in the beginning of the late campaign, and remained in such infirm health, that he desired leave to reside in his native air at Moscow, which was immediately granted, and accompanied by messages denoting the approbation and warm regard of the emperor.

The sentiments thus expressed were perfectly consonant to the feelings and opinions of Mary; nor were they opposed in the slightest degree by her father, who honoured courage even in an enemy; nevertheless, a slight ominous shudder crossed his features, not unobserved by Mary, though she had purposely seated herself at her embroidery. Alas! the name was a source of alarm; for she could not prevent the impetuous blood rushing to her cheeks whenever she heard it. "Theodore" was a word, though unuttered, ever on her lip, his image before her eye, his voice in her ear, and she had hoped that, from the constant familiarity of her thoughts and her sorrows as regarded him, she should be able to subdue any external signs of that which dwelt within; but at this time she had not attained the perfect self-command which her situation required.

Well, however, did she struggle with herself, knowing that other branches of the family must, from time to time, present themselves, and that the grand maréchal, whom she sincerely revered, was sure to appear whenever his infirmities permitted; therefore, she must compel herself to receive them without tears or blushes. The frequency of Ivan's visits had somewhat familiarized her to his appearance, and she could receive him without starting; but a lady of the court one day remarked, within her hearing, that "the arrival of Count Ivan made the empress colour," adding, maliciously, "but, indeed, he is a very fine-looking man."

Was it possible that one so artless, so retiring—one that knew her inmost soul was devoted to the memory of the dead only too fondly, could be suspected of a preference so unwarranted? Alas! in her peculiar situation there was room for the bad to suspect, and the good to fear; but never did the breath of slander light on her fair fame, or detect one glance of coquetry, one demand of vanity. This observation taught her self-restraint, the necessary accompaniment of the most perfect innocence at courts, and taught her also the value of her father's frequent presence; for, as he had been created Duke of Cazel in addition to his many honours, and also appointed grand steward of the Czar at the time of his proclamation, it was his duty to be frequently near the royal person; and it was not known beyond the precincts of the court that his influence was diminished or diminishing.

From the time of Ivan Dolgourouki's return, he, however, became sensible of it himself, and, therefore, performed his duties the more assiduously, and watched the proceedings of his young enemy the more attentively. Words merely spoken by chance frequently alarmed him from the mouth of Ivan, who was gay and lively, nevertheless shrewd and designing, and not unfrequently cast upon Menzikoff looks so fraught with meaning, that he could not for-

bear to entertain the belief that his cousin's death was known to him, and intended, hereafter, to be revenged upon himself. Penetrating and subtle, possessing the pride of his family; and, most probably, its ambition, though veiled under a careless demeanour, Ivan caused the powerful minister more of anxiety and suspicion than he had ever known before, and had the effect of quelling his project of seeking farther aggrandizement by the union of his son with the Princess Elizabeth. The relinquishment of his project was most happy for the boy so destined, since, instead of bringing him to court, and rendering him prematurely insidious, cunning, and subtle, with the despotism of a tyrant and the servility of a slave, he was now at liberty to pursue his studies under a wise tutor, and cultivate virtue and religion with a pious and high-minded mother.

To this mother the heart of the young emperor clung with even more of affection and dependence than she had ever known; to witness her returning health, receive the meed of probation from her lips, was a recompense and support to which she was continually looking, and which, after the death of the empress, she naturally hoped to enjoy. The princess had visited her sovereign once since Mary's removal; and the few moments she could pass in that trying time with her daughter were a mockery to her mother's feelings; so that she too expected, when the solemnities of the funeral and the pageants which followed had subsided, her daughter might be allowed to visit her freely, and, in reply to her request for that purpose, the emperor readily promised she should, professing himself sincerely attached to her, and happy to attend to her requests.

This promise was never fulfilled; for, even at the moment of departure, in the mere wantonness of caprice, Peter would command her to remain with him, and, in the same spirit, Ulrica her sister was forbidden to enjoy the gayeties of the court, and Alexander declared to be too young to appear there. Even when Mary urged the promise she had made to the late empress to fulfil on her behalf the duties of a godmother to her little sister, she was denied either visiting or receiving her, by an assurance that "so good a mother as hers could want no assistance in educating a baby;" and the emperor added, in a marked accent, and giving a glance to Ivan Dolgorouki, "don't trouble your head about her; you will have enough of her by-and-by."

These mortifications, combining with that abiding canker-worm which gnawed the heart in which it was enshrined, had an effect on her health and spirits she could not control; the rose, which began, though faintly, to revisit her cheek, under the effect of her beneficial exertions for the late empress, again faded—her appetite failed, and her form became attenuated. The symptoms, which moved compassion in others, awoke only anger in the monarch. It was the pleasure of the emperor that she should look not only beautiful, but gay, and dress very splendidly, for he observed that "his grandfather (whom everybody called great) liked the late empress because she was handsome, and set off his court; therefore he would have a handsome consort, and if she grew pale and ill-favoured, he would get a new wife; he knew very well the bishops could send her away any day

if she were not pretty and lively, and obeyed him as she ought to do."

When these taunts were uttered in the presence of the father, he felt not only angry, but alarmed, and took an early opportunity of urging his daughter, for the sake of all her family, to endeavour, by every means, to secure the attachment, or, at least, the approbation of her ill-conditioned husband. Mary thought she could do no more than she had done; but, having lately sought to beguile her sad thoughts by taking lessons in music from an Italian professor, she hoped to make it the medium of soothing and amusing her wayward little lord. The Czar had, indeed, an excellent ear, and the passion for music so universal in his country, and he became much pleased when she sang him the songs he was fond of; but his taste was not sufficiently cultivated to relish her performance on the harpsichord, then newly introduced. Frequently would he compel her to sing until she was completely exhausted, and then, forgetful of all the pleasure she had given him, he would rudely dismiss her from his presence, and again comment on her pale cheeks and exhausted appearance.

That the Czar was prompted to this cruel conduct Mary could not doubt, since she had become apparently dear and necessary to him during the last days of the empress, to whom he had yielded her as a painful loss to himself; and at that period she had entertained hopes, in common with her father and the royal invalid, of being extremely useful to him, and, consequently, to the country he must govern. These hopes had now vanished, and fears for her family awakened in their stead, and she could no longer doubt to whom she owed the change, for Ivan Dolgorouki sedulously persuaded the infatuated monarch that listening to a woman's singing was unworthy of him, and hastened to introduce men who sang hunting and drinking songs, whereby his original passion for the chase was revived in all its enthusiasm, and he was led to join in the libations of these companions to the immediate injury of his constitution, every error of this kind placing him under the care of his physicians, whose remonstrances endangered their own safety without producing advantage to him. So soon as his head could leave his pillow, he sought for the society of Ivan's company, who exercised over him an influence so absolute, that, a century earlier, it would have been imputed to witchcraft, but was undoubtedly that fascination which the accomplished Frenchwoman, under such an accusation, declared to be "the natural power of a strong mind over a weak one."

Ivan Dolgorouki used for a spell the word "manly," in order to stimulate a delicate boy of thirteen to efforts beyond his strength, and which, therefore, retarded considerably the growth and robustness he earnestly desired. He was himself athletic, and trained to encountering fatigue, and giving proof of strength and agility, and perhaps thought that, in tempting a weak and foolish boy to feats which nature forbade him to perform, he was training him to hardihood; but not wisely, since it must be evident that the life, and not the death, of his sovereign would be to his advantage. To Mary, and also to the young princesses, it appeared a system adopted to thwart the views of Menzikoff, who never failed to deprecate hunting for

the emperor until he were older, and always joined him in this diversion at great personal inconvenience, in order to guard him from danger on the field, and see that he received all possible care on arriving at the palace.

On these occasions, Mary never failed to arrange all things necessary for comfort and safety to the exhausted frame and jaded spirits of her lord; and he would, at the moment, be thankful for her attentions; but on the following day they would be resented as intrusive, and the cautions of her father considered as insult. At other times, because the prince had greatly increased in bulk, and was supposed to be averse to hunting, as a fatigued he would willingly escape, his attendance was imperatively called for, and the most important public business, which he was known to be desirous to despatch immediately, commanded to be postponed, since his presence was indispensable. Yet, on his arrival, coarse jokes on his person, sneers on his love for business, as "one who was born to labour," or cold, averted looks, and fond attention to the favourite, were all he met from the boy wont to receive all his pleasures from his hands during the life of his grand sire; the boy whom he had loved as his own, and "borne on his back a thousand times." It was evident that not only affection was extinct, but hatred engendered in the royal mind towards him, yet it was expressed with enough of outward courtesy to hold him true in his allegiance; and, indeed, Mary was held in the light of a hostage for her father, who was frequently observed to eye her with looks of the tenderest pity, and there were times when his proud heart swelled almost to suffocation with indignant emotion.

There were not wanting those about the court who might have told the young emperor that, but for Menzikoff, the Duke of Holstein might have been on the throne, seeing that the Dolgourokii had always desired his elevation; but, alas! "a favourite has no friends;" and even those who inwardly blamed the emperor for his ingratitude, and thought that Ivan Dolgourokii was a poor exchange for the talented Menzikoff, yet remembered some offence given in the hour of his greatness which wounded their self-love, some omission in his distribution of places which mortified their cupidity; yet all saw so clearly the fickle temper and vacillating weakness of the emperor, that they knew not but another week might exhibit Menzikoff again in the ascendant, and his blameless daughter appear as idolized as she was lovely.

CHAPTER XX.

From the Empress Mary to the Princess Menzikoff.

LETTER L.

Oh! my beloved mother, how can I longer bear this cruel separation!—you are sick, and Mary is not kneeling by your couch; your heart is ill at ease, fearing alike for your daughter and your husband, and I not near to soothe your spirits, or, perhaps, allay your anxieties; yet we are but a few verats astunder, and numerous horses, stately carriages, are supposed to be at my command. Alas! the daughter of the lowest serf is not as cotted in spirit, as enslaved to

circumstances, so enveloped in the meshes of idle ceremonies and silly commands, as your own poor Mary, whom men gaze at with wonder, dazzled by her diamonds.

But my time is limited (although, thank Heaven, my apartment is sacred!) and I have taken up my pen not to speak of my own situation, nor to pour into your tender heart those sacred sorrows which you alone can pity and sooth. I will not even mention the *name*; I will follow your advice and obey your precepts. Dear mamma, praise your own Mary for a forbearance necessity, not resignation, has taught her.

My alarm is so excited on my dear father's behalf (which, of course, includes us all), and I am so encompassed by listeners and spies, that I durst not trust the delivery of this to any hands but his own; the intent of it being to persuade him to leave the court—the country. Did not our dear friend Bruckenthal say he had large sums vested at Venice? That beautiful country would restore your health and his own peace of mind; he would be honoured by the natives, among whom his riches would circulate, and those sunny-hearted people would atone to him for the cold, ungrateful breasts around him. He could exercise the best power, that of doing good; and as his years increase, his desires will become moderate, and the empire of charity, benevolence, and knowledge suffice. Yes! he will be far happier than he has ever been.

I see clearly (and I think he also sees it) that there is an intention of so thwarting his wishes, and defying his advice, as to provoke him to resign his situation, and ask leave to travel; and when he has so done, his estates will be confiscated, his palaces given to others, and his immense wealth made the occasion of base accusations; for, although they all know the manner in which he has received those noble gifts, in recompence for noble actions, no one will choose to recollect what the ungrateful sovereign wishes to be forgotten, and what he cannot personally remember. Yet surely this offers no reason for not instantly relinquishing his situation, and flying while it is yet within his power. Father, dear father, surely you are reading this letter!—my mother has placed it in your hands; she is pale and trembling by your side; she kneels (as I do in spirit), and beseeches you to have mercy on yourself, on her, on the promising son, the lovely daughters, whom every country in Europe will be proud to receive.

I conjure you by the virtues of my mother, that mother so fondly loved and so highly respected, to have pity upon her, and secure to her evening of life a peaceful end. Nay, I conjure you by my own patient bearing, my continual efforts to endure cheerfully a loathed life, to afford me the only reward my sacrifice admits; let me know that you are safe, and I shall have my only chance for comparative happiness.

Think not that you have only to contend with a few evil words from insignificant courtiers; he who breathes a scandal soon becomes a malignant liar, and the whisperer of a detraction presently becomes the inventor and propagator of a wicked fiction. Sin feeds on itself, and becomes strong. My experience compared with yours is, I grant, a very short one, but it has shown me a growth in evil purposes and insinuating falsehoods, of recklessness as to the welfare of others, ingratitude for the highest serv-

ces, and overweening selfishness that I should have thought a long life nurtured in evil could scarcely have attained. What honest men have we but Count Sapicha and Woronzow? Who retains the integrity and simplicity of early life but the old field-marechal? Are the women better than the men, more free from ambitious aspiration, from a mean, intriguing, prying spirit, intent on finding the means of mischief to those whom they affect to love, or whose patronage they court? Oh, no! they are not better, but worse; and in cases where you have been the sole making of their sons and husbands, these female reptiles tattle of your actions as if "the poison of asps were under their lips."

"Tis true you escaped bad consequences when the wife of the unfortunate Alexis accused you falsely of giving bad counsel to the heir of the empire, but then Peter the Great was your judge. Yet a time came when this sovereign, so fondly attached to you and so full of wisdom, did give ear to accusations against you, deprived you of your principality, and meditated your death. That he should have calmly reconsidered the matter, and reinstated you the following day, was much less likely, dear father, than that your head had rolled from the block, and Peter, when too late, lamented your loss and punished your accusers.

The good empress was always grieving over the imperfection of Russian laws, and saying "it would take a century to reform them," though she herself did much under your guidance. The progress of such improvement is for the present checked, and will be so as long as Peter reigns. We have no war calling for your generalship, therefore Providence itself seems to call on you to take care of yourself. To perish for your country would be a glorious and worthy death, but to perish by a wicked faction, and leave a desolate widow, a ruined family—father, father, do not dare to commit the sin of negligence—

I am obliged to relinquish my pen; the emperor's head aches, and he sends for me.

Remember my words: I am most anxiously, but most affectionately, your own fond

MARY.

The Empress Mary to the Princess Mensikoff.

LETTER II.

My dearest Mother,

A new and awful visitation has occurred: the emperor is seized with that dreadful pestilence, the smallpox; and, so great was his debility previous, the physicians think he has small chance of enduring it. The princesses have removed to Peterhoff, the court have fled, all the servants who have not had it decline coming near the apartments. Let not my dear father come to visit us, for, though safe himself, he may convey the infection to his family.

Fumigate any billet I may hereafter send before you read it. I write now because I am going to take my abode in the emperor's chamber. At this awful crisis I will not behave as one unworthy of such a mother as I was blessed with. The issue is with God; *his will be done!*

Should I be taken, remember that my attachment to one who was taken first made this world a desert, and . . . I find I cannot write; tears will flow when thoughts of the past are awakened; and I must be tranquil that I may

be useful. You can only help me by your prayers, beloved mother, and well I knew you will pray for your

MARY.

Piously and with full purpose of heart did Mary now repair to her sick husband's chamber, who was then suffering from the fever of the disease he had imbibed in an extraordinary degree. His constitution debilitated by over-exertion, his blood heated by the pernicious potions taken to recruit his jaded spirits, and give temporary strength for the occasion, rendered him in a state singularly unfitted for taking the infection; and the weather having set in extremely cold, the eruption would not come out freely, so that no rational hopes were entertained of a favourable issue; and, in such a season, the fear of contagion, more especially from such a subject, became itself a disease to the pampered inmates of the palace.

The young Czarina alone, neither fearing for her life nor her beauty, alike moved by that compassion which ever animated her breast, and that high sense of duty which always marked her conduct, gave herself up to watching him day and night with equal skill and tenderness. She soon perceived that even when delirious he knew her voice, and submitted to her entreaties; and, having been informed by the medical attendants that he should drink freely of the warm gruels provided for him, and which he had hitherto obstinately refused, she applied all her powers of persuasion to overcome his aversion. By degrees she prevailed on him to take the cup from her hands, and he soon became sensible of the relief to his parched mouth, and demanded it himself. The consequence was, amelioration of the burning heat, a determination of the disease to the skin, and in another day the appearance of pustules in the ordinary way.

Conscious of the great care she had manifested, and assured by his physician that all was going on well with him, the few words now uttered by the sufferer were praise of her knowledge and thanks for her love, to which, at intervals, were added inquiries as to who remained in the palace, since the state of his eyes precluded him from knowing whether few or many visited the sick chamber. In reply, he was informed by the resident chaplain that not only was visiting his chamber imminently dangerous to those who entered, but exceedingly injurious to himself, and that, at the utmost, two persons only ought to be admitted at a time.

"Then I will only have one: it is my wife who has given me the bad physic and the soft draughts, and who holds my head and shakes my pillow, and I will have nobody at all but her; so go away yourself directly."

"Alas! sire, the empress is completely worn out; she looks fainting at this very moment."

"Take her away, then, take her away. I won't have fainting people near me; what business has she to faint, I wonder?"

At this very moment Mary dropped on the floor, and the attendants, who waited without, were loudly summoned to carry her to her own apartments. On the arrival of the physician he pronounced her infected with the disease, which he suspected to be the case some days before, and solicited her majesty, but in vain, to take the necessary care of herself. On hearing this the Czar became much affected, and declared

that he owed his life to her, if he should eventually recover ; and it was soon rumoured that the power of Menzikoff would become greater than it had ever been, whether the young empress recovered or not, since the emperor now frequently reverted to various times when he had been in danger in the field, from which that prince had rescued him, and to many periods when he had suffered from taking those potations against which he had cautioned him. "He has been good to me all my life," said he, warmly, "and so was the empress ; I have had no real friend besides them."

This conviction of Menzikoff's uprightness and true kindness seemed to gain strength in proportion as his mind rose, purified from the disease ; and the faculties, long clouded by improper conduct, regained the power of reason and recollection. Unhappily, as his disorder abated apparently, it yet exhibited symptoms of an alarming character, and gave reason to suppose that the lungs were affected, and rapid consumption would ensue.

When Menzikoff found that his daughter was in danger, he determined to visit the palace, and for a time, renounce his now beloved home, lest he should injure his family, a resolution exceedingly approved by his wife, whose anxiety, on her daughter's account, amounted to very agony, since she was become unable to gain any intelligence of her progress on which she could rely. The prince first visited the couch of the emperor, whom he understood to be convalescent, and of whose returning regard for himself he had heard much from those who, depending on his future services, sought thus to gain his good-will.

He was received, indeed, with apparent pleasure and thankfulness ; but he was so shocked to observe the effects of the horrible disorder, and so sensible of the extreme weakness of the invalid, that he stayed a very short time in the apartment, having, indeed, been requested to do so by the physician. He now hastened to that of his beloved child, with whom the complaint was making its customary progress, and which was borne by her with such patient resignation to Heaven, and such obedience to her attendants, that they ventured, in the first instance, to predict the most favourable issue. They knew not the hidden sorrows, the painful surmises, rankling in the gentle bosom of one whose sensibility was as acute as her understanding was powerful, and were surprised to find that, as the disorder increased, she too became rambling in discourse, and full of melancholy prognostications. On seeing her father she evinced a perfect recollection of him, yet little pleasure ; for, at that time, her whole soul was occupied, to distraction, with desire for his departure, and she was continually raving about ships and the shallows in the Gulf of Cronstadt, which were occasioned by the bones of a warrior that required entombment. Well did her father understand the ideas floating in her bewildered mind, and much did he fear lest the incoherent words she uttered, in a low but thrilling tone, should be registered by any inquisitive attendant ; but still more did he desire to convey to her something on which her heart could repose for comfort, as respected himself and family.

The letter written by the young empress to her mother had, to a certain degree, alarmed him, because her views coincided with his own

observations ; and it drew his heart to her who felt and feared so much for him in cords of affection more strong than he had ever felt them ; but, while he owned the truth with which she characterized the courtiers in general, he believed she went too far in her condemnations, as the young usually do, whether for praise or blame : nor could he believe that she who was, the other day, a mere child, running after flowers in his garden, could be in any way competent to judge what was proper for him to submit to or elude. Who knew better how to sound the depths of courts than one who had dwelt among them since he was thirteen, whom his mighty master had so often praised for adroitness and versatility, and found a successful diplomatist in every court to which he had sent him ? Surely he who had grappled so often with the passions of Peter, and the envious hostility of all his principal old nobility, ought not to quail before the least important of all the Dolgouroukii, and the merest boy that ever swayed a sceptre.

Often as these thoughts passed in succession over the mind of Menzikoff, as he sat by his daughter's couch, she would start and utter words which seemed as if given in reply to what was passing in his mind ; and the expressions were frequently so terse and apposite, that, heard by the bed of sickness, and too probably of death, to a superstitious man they would have been appalling, and held to be prophetic ; but Menzikoff was not superstitious, either as the word applied to the ceremonies of his national church, or to the thousand omens and dogmas believed in by the great body of his people, from the class in which he was born, even to that with whom he now mingled. He, therefore, imputed such wandering predictions and warnings to their true cause, as disease acting on an already agitated mind, teeming with past sorrows and present fears, and was the more confirmed in his resolution to stand his ground, maintain the dignity of his station, and encourage his friends to support him, by showing them he could support himself. Besides, did he not know that the emperor now saw the error of his late conduct ? He had always seen some good traits in his disposition, and always believed that Mary would elicit them ; and he could not doubt that, from this eventful time, she would be loved and honoured as she ought to be. The Czar had said that he owed his life to her care ; should that life be prolonged, of course he would cherish her for his own sake ; and, should he die, appoint her his successor.

He stooped over his daughter to convey to her, if possible, a share of his own satisfaction, and perceived her eyes closed in slumber ; and, although he had not permitted himself to feel alarm from her words, his imagination suggested new hopes from her silence. Every Russian is, by nature, gay and sanguine in his temperament, and Menzikoff was unusually so ; and every circumstance of his eventful life favoured the delusions of hope and the promises of conscious power. Having attained all which he desired, he supposed that he could ensure all that he willed. "The wife and daughter who loved and warned him were only women, and what was the wisest woman but a tool in the hand of a man ? She might second his purpose, but could never originate it."

Catherine, the late empress, had ever been

acknowledged, in Russia, the saviour of the army at Pruth ; and, in reward of her conduct at that period, the emperor crowned her with his own hands at Moscow, and spoke of her as his future successor. His army was at that time encamped on the banks of a river, and so surrounded by natural impediments, and hemmed in by a much larger army of the Turks, that his utter ruin seemed inevitable ; and in an agony of despair he retired to his tent, forbidding any person, on pain of death, to approach him. Catherine was with the army, as she accompanied him everywhere ; and by her presence, and the value he attached to her society, had rendered it a fashion for the wives of all the great officers of state to accompany their husbands, and bring with them their jewels, and large sums of money also.

In this terrific juncture, when the courage and intellect of him who had so often effected deliverance in times of danger were withdrawn, the Vice-chancellor Shasfirof called together the principal officers in the presence of Catherine, and drew up preliminaries in order to obtain a truce from the vizier, which the empress thought he was, under present circumstances, little likely to grant, and which could not be despatched without the signature of the emperor. In this emergency, she sought to obtain by bribery what would be denied to treaty ; and, throwing all her own valuables and money into her apron, she assembled all the ladies around her, pointed out to them the terrible situation in which their husbands and themselves were placed, and so wrought on them, by her simple eloquence, her tears, and her example, that every one brought all the property she possessed, and a sum beyond calculation was collected instantly. Her wishes thus crowned with success, her spirits excited to the utmost, and all the nobler qualities of her generous nature awakened, at the immediate and avowed hazard of her life she commanded the guards to give way, and rushed, with the treasure she had acquired and the preliminaries handed to her, into the presence of the emperor.

Whatever might have been the first emotions of rage in that violent man, who often confessed that he had reformed his country but not himself, we know not : it is enough to say that Catherine's voice had not lost its power of entreaty, nor her swimming eyes their power of captivation. The treaty was signed, the treasure conveyed, and not only a truce, but a peace, was happily purchased.

Menzikoff was the happy mediator on this occasion, and well he knew he had been instigator also. To him had been already revealed the cupidity of the vizier ; and he had ascertained, through various channels, the certainty of extraordinary wealth, existing in the hands of women who were, at this time, shut out from view with as much jealousy as in the harems of the enemy, and who had, therefore, no chance of exhibiting the jewels capable of effecting this important business. Well did he also know the unselfish nature of the empress, and her power over the heart of her ferocious husband ; nevertheless, he trembled for her, at the moment of her entrance, as he had never trembled for himself : and we may well believe the Princess Menzikoff was moved to agony.

Recollection of this, and many other transactions of lesser consequence, now rushing on his

mind, naturally served to confirm his foregone conclusions ; and, on quitting his daughter, he despatched a messenger to his wife to relieve her of various apprehensions, and entered himself on the despatch of public business, with not only the zeal and ability which distinguished him, but with an air of cheerfulness and importance which had of late appeared to have forsaken him. This was universally imputed to the altered sentiments the emperor had evinced towards himself and the empress, in consequence of which many visits were made to the Princess Menzikoff, and an interest evinced in the health of her daughter that wore the character of friendship.

For all those messages which gave a favourable account of her beloved Mary's progress, the princess was deeply thankful to the Great Disposer, but neither in the exultation of her husband, nor the congratulations of his friends, could she rejoice as assurances of the emperor's regard. She had known him from his cradle, and remarked that a peculiar fickleness was a part of his nature, and was in itself pitiable, as being apparently derived from his father. Had he been put under a kind but firm tuition, and compelled to obey the dictates of a superior, he might have attained steadiness of conduct from habit, which would have been seconded by his own reason as his mind expanded, and he became sensible of the value of stability. On the contrary, the natural delicacy of his constitution had induced the easy-tempered empress to foster the error of his nature, and add the caprice of petulance to the weakness of mutability ; and, while educating for a station of life which, above all others, calls for calm examination, cool judgment, perseverance, and decision, he was allowed daily to break his toys, dismiss his servants, beat his playfellows, and swear at his tutor, whenever it was his pleasure, "because by-and-by he would want them all again, and most probably treat them all very well : it was Peter's way, poor fellow."

Very different had been the conduct of the princess to her own son, who had been given over by his busy and ambitious father more than he ought, but the powers of the most distinguished minds are finite, and he who takes charge of numerous nations of different laws, habits, religions, and capabilities (conglomerated, not amalgamated), must inevitably abandon the duties and forego the pleasures of paternity. Children that, only as pedestals, support a father's grandeur, cannot be expected to crown his brow or nestle in his bosom.

CHAPTER XXI.

So soon as Ivan Dolgourouki heard of the short visit made by Menzikoff to the palace, he also went thither, and determined to be an abiding guest : he had himself gone through the disease in his infancy ; but, fully expecting the emperor would die, and anxious to assist the Duke of Holstein in the succession, he took the advantage of the season, and journeyed towards those friends who were likely to aid his views, giving orders that he should be followed with information of what was passing at the Winter Palace. Surprised to hear that Peter lived, and not sorry to find the empress was expected

to die, he hastened back with the utmost celerity, and soon presented himself to the royal invalid.

" So ! you are come now I don't want you. Come to look at me now I am a fright, but you ran away like the rest when you might have nursed me and done me good. I take it exceedingly ill of you, Count Ivan Dolgourouki, because you had not the same motive other people had ; you did not fear the infection."

" The physicians forbade entrance into your majesty's chamber, and everybody must know that company would have made you much worse before the crisis, though a little is now needful for your amusement."

" I don't care for physicians ; their potions do me no good, and I like to have people whom I know ready to speak to me ; it was cruel to leave me, and I have a right to be offended with you above everybody in the world."

" I am exceedingly glad your majesty is strong enough to scold ; it is a sign you will grow fast, and become a very stout man ; it was my own case ; the best thing that ever came to me was the smallpox—it made a man of me."

" Sit down and tell me exactly how you felt, and when you began to grow, and how they managed you."

From this moment Ivan Dolgourouki gained the sole and nearly exclusive possession of the emperor's ear, to whom he paid the most sedulous and unremitting attention. He would frequently inquire after the empress, especially as to her appearance, and whether she remained weak ; in reply to which, he was generally told (by Ivan Dolgourouki's orders) " that her situation resembled his own, save that she was weaker as being a female," an answer always satisfactory. The truth was, that she had risen from her bed of sickness extremely debilitated, but unmarked by a single scar—a circumstance the attendants feared might render the emperor fretful, and thereby increase the weakness under which he continued to labour.

Two or three of the principal officers, from time to time, were admitted for a few minutes, and when it was supposed all infection had passed away, his sisters were recalled, but it appeared to be for no other purpose than to upbraid them and dismiss them ; but he expressed no desire to see the empress ; and when he spoke of her, said repeatedly, if she continued weak and pale, and especially if she was grown ugly (as she most likely was), he should put her away directly, and marry some foreign princess ; and this was repeated so often, that the late reports of the favour in which Menzikoff stood were entirely reversed, although they thought it hard that the one of all his family who had remained with him, and been to him an invaluable friend, " should be so treated ;" and as it was thought by all that Ivan Dolgourouki influenced all the emperor's words, and might be said to speak with his voice, there were some, when he took his accustomed rides, who had the good feeling to remonstrate with him on behalf of one so virtuous and beneficent as Mary. To their observations the favourite only replied " that the emperor was petulant, as many invalids were during convalescence, but that he had no meaning in his words, and more frequently praised the empress for her goodness, than blamed her for what she could not help."

It was yet certain that words of the like im-

port were bandied about, and the name of a young princess mentioned as Mary's successor in case of the loss of her beauty, and at length spoke of to her father. Menzikoff had trembled for the life of his child while she was attending her husband's sick-bed, yet he did not allow himself, by a single word of remonstrance, to intrude upon the holy sacrifice she was performing, nor had he uttered a sentence of lamentation for the consequences which ensued ; but he could not bear in silence to hear the wayward boy, whose life was preserved by her cares, to whom her virtues were a blessing and her talents an honour, declare an intention to repudiate his virgin wife if she had lost her beauty by the disease he had communicated, and which had left him under its worst infliction. No : his indomitable pride, the merit of his child, and his own long services alike forbade it ; and although he replied with the forms of speech due to his sovereign, the petted boy was conscious of the turmoil he had raised in the father's bosom, and the deep contempt with which he was regarded.

Mary, in the mean time, was slowly progressing in health, and most thankful to receive visits from the Princess Anne, who was much attached to her, and came to her apartments so soon as it was possible to do it with safety. She had unfortunately suffered her heart to imbibe a passion for the Duke of Biron, who was unworthy the gift, and proved, at a later period, so much the trouble of her life, that most probably he was the means of accelerating her death ; but he was now remanded to a great distance, and it was a consolation to her to pour the tale of tender sorrows into the ear of the solitary invalid. Mary could sympathize but too well with her feelings, but in reply " she never told her love," though the princess guessed it, and praised her for the forbearance she evinced, as becoming the wife of her cousin. With what passed in the apartment of the emperor she was at this time totally unacquainted, but the tattle of the world without she had heard, and commenced her narrative by saying,

" The people, soon after the late empress's death, insisted that she was poisoned ; nothing could be more ridiculous, for we all know that she had two dangerous complaints, either of which would have killed her, and that her own bad habits might have done it without either, though at a later period ; nevertheless, it has been bruited through Petersburg, and, of course, will make its way through Europe, that General Devriev killed her by a poisoned pear. She was fond of fruit to excess, we all know, and I suppose she might make herself ill with one."

" She ate not one, but many, at a time when they were sure to make her worse, and while I was sleeping on the sofa. I well remember the time, because I was so grieved that I had ceased to watch her."

" Then it seems there was something like the shadow of a shade whereon to hang a story in this case ; but they now say your father is the man who poisoned her, in consequence of a slight quarrel. It must have been slight indeed, for it evidently did not injure their friendship, which all the world knows remained firm to the last."

" My poor father !" cried Mary, suddenly, " with how many enemies hast thou to contend !"

"This tale defeats itself, and will soon die away as the first did, but it is certain your father has much to contend with; and, had the emperor been taken, my sister, the Duchess of Holstein, would, I doubt, have soon displaced him, for I know Ivan Dolgourouki has intrigued against him in that quarter. Indeed, none of the royal family respect him as they ought, save myself and Elizabeth,* and we are too far from the crown to ensure his welfare; we have no influence; you have none, well as you have deserved it; in fact, Ivan rules all; he is everybody."

"And he is my father's evil genius."

"I think so not less than you; in fact, he is a man I dislike and fear; yet I can tell you one anecdote of him that you will own was noble. Old Lubitsch Dolgourouki, the constant opponent of your father, as proud a Keyser as ever lived, on his son Theodore refusing to go to the war with him, declared 'that Ivan should be his heir'; and would have proceeded immediately to invest him as such, leaving only to Theodore the estates he already held from his mother; but Ivan would not hear of it; he said he would fulfil a son's duties to his uncle, but never rob a cousin whom he must honour for his virtues, and whom he actually loved better than any person upon earth. Was not that admirable?"

"Very, very admirable!" said Mary, moving towards a sofa.

"You are ill, Mary; yet your cheeks, even your forehead, glows. I will assist you; I will not call an attendant; I am your friend, Mary."

The empress burst into tears, but spoke not.

"God help you! you are worse off than myself, for you know not where Theodore is; but I will not repeat a name which I see you have abjured. I will leave you to seek composure. Would that I could imitate you as truly as I esteem you sincerely!"

The Princess Anne retired, leaving the invalid full of awakened regret and melancholy presages, ardently desiring a few minutes' conversation with her father for the purpose of again urging him to depart while it was in his power, and when the health of her mother presented a self-evident reason. It then struck her that she could mention her mother's health to the emperor, who had always professed a great regard for the princess, and induce him to forward the plan of removing the whole family to a warmer climate; and so strongly did the idea seize upon her, that, after despatching an attendant to request permission, she threw on a veil and proceeded to visit the emperor.

She found the invalid playing draughts with Ivan Dolgourouki, who started in extreme confusion on her entrance, not having attended to her message when she sent to request admission. The emperor probably thinking surprise the proper emotion of a *man* on the occasion, protested "that she had terrified him exceedingly, for she looked like a ghost and not a woman, much less an empress," and desired "she would not think of entering the Presence till she looked more like a creature of flesh and blood;" adding, in a reproachful tone, "that she had so managed herself as to avoid all pockmarks, but she had fastened abundance upon him, with her pretended good nursing."

Mary retired instantly, somewhat indignant, but far more sorrowful. The image of Theodore had been so lately recalled to her mind, that she could not forbear to think how differently he would have received her under the same circumstances, and imagination offered his image, his words, and the peculiar tenderness of his looks and manners, under circumstances of an affecting nature, as she saw him at their first meeting, or had seen him last, when, with all the pathos of harrowing solicitude, he had predicted those evils to her house which she now believed to be about falling upon it, though she could not see in what manner the storm would descend.

From the peculiar confusion manifested in the countenance of Count Ivan, and the extraordinary rudeness, and indeed inhumanity, of the emperor, she was induced to believe that they had been speaking of her before her entrance, and most probably suggesting some scheme to mortify or degrade her; yet how, or why, she could not conceive. On chancing to see herself reflected in a mirror, and referring to the words uttered by the Czar, light seemed to break at once upon her case, and she exclaimed,

"Ah! Peter once said he would not have me if I lost my beauty; and more than once has Ivan, in my presence, talked of the necessity every monarch had of forming foreign alliances—happy, thrice happy should I be, if he would dismiss me, and consider my degradation an atonement for my father's error in placing me on the throne. I would my mother knew that the cloud she has so long thought impending over us would burst with no worse effect than that of restoring to her a daughter more calculated to be worthy of her friendship than before she entered on a scene for which she is totally unfitted, and which time would render her less able to endure."

When next the Princess Anna visited her, she mentioned the rude reception the Czar had given her, which appeared by no means to surprise her auditor, who, after ruminating some time in silence, said,

"I know that plans are constantly meditating against you, and even that your father has given great offence by resenting them; nay, it has even been whispered that negotiations are making with either a Polish or a German court; but, with all this, I do not believe Peter will ever carry the designs he may partially devise, or allow, into effect. Only yesterday evening he told old Counts Voronoff and Berleff the progress of his disorder, and spoke of your patience and tenderness with tears in his eyes, exclaiming, as he concluded, 'I can never part with her! never!' I have been received myself this morning; and on saying I was coming to see you, he spoke of you affectionately, but said 'you must not come into his apartment until you were well, till you could go out and get a little colour,' and this I would have you attempt as soon as possible."

"I will do that gladly—perhaps I may now be permitted to visit my mother!"

"I think you may, for the emperor is about to have the singing-men whom Count Ivan Dolgourouki introduced, and whose conduct produced so much injury before, as I told him; but my remonstrance, though given in the kindest language a relation could use, drew only ill-natured reproach, and even threats. Such con-

* These two princesses reigned in succession soon afterwards.

duct is very trying, especially when one clearly perceives that he is really ill, notwithstanding his assertion to the contrary."

In a few days, the physician having declared that a change of air would benefit her, and that all danger of infection was over, Mary wrote an humble note, requesting leave to visit her mother for a week, at the same time mentioning the necessity of changing the air, as urged by her medical attendants.

By a verbal message she was rudely refused permission to repair to Oranienbaum, but informed that she might go to any of the palaces in the emperor's possession; but, before she had determined what to do, a kind note was delivered to her, saying "that the emperor had reconsidered the matter, and thought it better she should depart for Oranienbaum on the morrow, and that he had sent a courier there to announce her intention, and given the necessary order for her carriage and attendants."

This note was written by Ivan Dolgotrouki, and was some time after followed by a verbal message, fixing an early hour for receiving her adieu; because, at that time, the emperor would be quite alone.

This message, and the air of secrecy with which it was delivered, confirmed her in the belief that the emperor was entirely under the influence, and virtually the command, of Ivan; that he had, in the first place, been harsh, under the idea of showing himself manly and despotic; and, in the second, followed a better disposition as permitted by his ruler, and the same ameliorated sentiment continuing, he was unwilling to part with her in coldness and indifference.

At all events, the permission was the happiest thing which had befallen her since the day when she came hither a reluctant, mourning, but determined sacrifice; and, with the sweet anticipations of her age and her sex, she felt that to be pressed to her mother's heart, and converse with her sister, brother, and the infant, would render her as happy as she was in the days of childhood; and the anxieties which had lately harassed her so much, on behalf of her father and family, seemed to vanish like a dream.

Such are the privileges of youth, and the rewards of a pure, well-nurtured affection. Mary had an abiding sorrow, but she had also in full perfection the clinging fondness of a child and sister, and the power of finding in the love of her natural connexions an emollient which soothed the wound it could not heal. For many months it had been cruelly withheld, vexatiously refused, and was now hailed with joy, proportioned to the disappointments so frequently experienced.

Determined, if possible, to improve the present leaning of the emperor, and fully relying on the information and judgment of the Princess Anne, she dressed herself with the utmost care, and caused her attendants to dispose of her costly ornaments in the most becoming manner; her hair, which was long and luxuriant, being curled spirally, and falling on each side in the manner seen in Vandyke's pictures, and till lately in England; and, for the first and last time in her life, adopted *rouge*, which the Russian court was then beginning to use in imitation of that of Louis XIV. This magnificent dress being more calculated to please the eye

of her husband than ensure her own comfort, she caused her attendant to place apparel of a more homely character in the carriage, and proceeded to the boudoir of the emperor.

Her endeavours to win approbation did not at this time fail of effect—the Czar praised her appearance exceedingly, and seemed to argue that, as her health was evidently improved in the last week, his must do so likewise, since he took the disorder first. He made innumerable inquiries after her symptoms and sensations, and yet seemed to have something more to say, which he evidently repressed with difficulty, and at length observed, in a tremulous voice, as if ready to weep,

"Well, Mary! let what will happen hereafter, I shall always say you were the best of all wives to me. I should not have been alive now, if you had not watched me and nursed me kindly, for all I was often cross—when emperors are dying, nobody cares for them—they think only of their successors—you did not want to succeed me, I am certain."

"Indeed I did not," said the empress, emphatically; adding, "pray don't speak so mournfully; you are better now, and will gain a little strength every day."

"I speak that which is uppermost, because you are going to leave me, and I cannot speak to you to-morrow."

Mary immediately professed her willingness to remain, and send off a courier immediately.

"No, no," he cried, impatiently, "my word is passed, and every man, more especially an emperor, must keep his word." Then, in a softened and desponding tone, he added, "Yes, he must keep his word, and his secrets; so go, dear Mary; but first let me tie this necklace round your neck—I believe it is of immense value, but, were it twice as much, you deserve it—but I wish it to be quite hidden under your gown, as well as your pelisse—there! no one can see it now, and I beg you not to show it."

As the emperor spoke, he tied a brilliant necklace round her fair throat so loosely that it admitted of being tucked beneath the close winter-clothing the season and her weak state compelled her to adopt. When he had arranged it to his satisfaction, he kissed her tenderly, and said, in great trepidation, "There! go away—if you stay another minute, I shall not let you go at all—I feel as if I could not."

Cold indeed must be the heart that does not return affection in some degree, especially when duty and gratitude join in the claim. Despite of his unfortunate appearance, this newly-exhibited tenderness awoke in Mary's bosom the warmest sense of regard and pity her young husband ever had elicited, and she departed with feelings of regret she had thought herself incapable of experiencing, saying to herself, "I am sure I should love Peter as well as Alexander, if he were always thus kind and amiable—yes, I could be to him a most affectionate sister! Why does that wicked man influence him against me!"

Every circumstance, as she pursued her journey, rose to her mind as confirmatory of her fears of Ivan's inimical influence. She recalled the looks and words of the young Czar, the confusion of his countenance, the sudden breaks in his sentences, and especially the secrecy of a gift of great value, given, one would suppose, for the express purpose of being exhibited; and

which, it was natural to conclude, he would have made her openly, since he openly acknowledged his obligation to her. Must he not be positively under the control of one he dreaded to offend, more than he had ever feared the empress or her father in his early infancy?—and if Dolgourouki could thus mould him to his will, at the very time when his temper, however petulant, and his mind, though vacillating, still retained a sense of her kindness, surely she ought to have remained, almost by force, in order to watch over him with maternal solicitude, fore-stall his wishes, amuse his wearisome hours, and, if possible, prevent the return of those coarse and noisy companions whom Ivan had introduced apparently for the purpose of keeping herself and the princesses at a distance; and to induce him, from the exhaustion occasioned by illness, to indulge in wine, which his constitution forbade him to take, and which, in his present state, was utter ruin.

Yet, when she recollects, on the other side, the implicit obedience he upon all occasions exacted, and the absolute dependence of a Russian wife, together with the schemes now plotting against her, who could say that any possible act which militated against his commands would not be used as an excuse for her punishment?—and who believe that she should fail alone? If her father fell, she would be willing to partake his fall; but God forbid that she should be the means of pulling down the man she had become a victim in the hope to avert?

That father had set forth in all the splendour which he loved to exhibit, and doubtless with much of the affection she so well merited, to meet his empress daughter; and it grieved his heart to behold her arrayed so magnificently, and looking so beautiful, though by the aid of art. The pleasure that sparkled in his eyes, and animated his voice, so far reassured her that she forbore to damp his happiness by rendering him the partaker of her present apprehensions, although she much wished to inform him of what was passing in her bosom; and she proceeded in solitary grandeur, under his stately escort, to the most beautiful palace in Russia—a palace which was the gift of a generous sovereign to an unequalled servant, whether for loyalty or utility; but yet a gift which her successor never ceased to envy till it was again in the possession of the monarchy, with whom it remains at the present hour.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALL fears for the future, all sorrows in the present, were forgotten at that joyful moment when the young Czarina (our gentle Mary) once more found herself clasped to her mother's breast, and surrounded by the dear companions of her early and only happy days. When her father beheld her innocent delight at thus entering, unshackled by forms, the dear paternal home, his proud heart melted, and tears struck into his eyes, from the sad conviction that here only could she be happy; and that the stately home to which, with so much difficulty, he had conducted her, was strewed with more thorns than belong even to royal residences, and that a heart full of all the sweetest impul-

ses and sympathies of nature should be rejected and chilled at the very period when it naturally sought to be cherished and consoled.

Mary found her brother, who had entered his fifteenth year, much improved during her absence. He was a youth of extraordinary intelligence, simple manners, but an ardent, affectionate heart; and he expressed his delight, on seeing her, with the utmost artlessness, forgetting the empress in the sister. Ulrica, on the contrary, treated her with profound respect, not unmixed with conscious dignity on her own part; and she was not long before she hinted her sense of the neglect she had experienced, in never being invited to the balls given occasionally at the palace. This had been a source of great mortification to Mary, and of inward vexation to Prince Menzikoff; but she had laboured in vain to avert the covert insult expressed in it, and well knew that Ivan Dolgourouki had purposely thwarted her wishes. He was, indeed, the more able to do this, because the emperor had liked neither her brother nor sister when he was staying at Oranienbaum, considering their superior knowledge and accomplishments a tacit reproach of his own ignorance.

“Dear Ulrica,” said Mary, fondly embracing her, “do not be cold and distant to me, nor doubt, for a moment, that I have experienced the most cruel mortification in not being permitted to invite you; but the same influence which prevented me from visiting my mother was extended to wound me in this particular. You may consider me exalted in rank, and suppose, also, that my age would give me a little power, as I am now turned of seventeen; but this is not the case. I am entirely a Russian wife, subservient in everything to my husband's will, and indeed his whims. Ever since I lost the empress, who was truly my friend, this despotism has been practised towards me. There is a power behind the throne, which, in seeking to injure my father, grinds my father's daughter to the dust, far more than you can suppose or he suspects.”

“Then would I drag it before the court and the country,” said Ulrica, proudly; “yes, I would expose and banish it; I would not be young and fair, and know myself the daughter of that man who, next to Peter the Great, has been the highest benefactor of Russia, without making my claims, and proving my power in turn.”

“Probably you might do it, and be successful, Ulrica; but, if not, the effort would be ruinous. I have neither the talents necessary for disconcerting the bold, nor detecting the cunning. I tremble for the effects on my family, should any assertion of my own rights be made and frustrated. I dare not provoke revenge in my desire for justice.”

As the empress spoke, she looked earnestly at her sister, and thought her the very loveliest young woman in all the Russias, and was sensible of the pride and pleasure she should have had in placing her next to the princesses in her most brilliant circle. She had grown up so remarkably like herself, as she appeared at the time when seized with that illness which ensued on parting with Theodore, that they might have been taken for each other; but there was in the features of the empress a more touching expression of tenderness than in those of the

beautiful, but gay, and somewhat haughty countenance of Ulrica.

Their present discussion was broken in upon by the arrival of little Catherine, a lovely child, beginning to lisp its wishes and conceptions, full of that animated gayety and inquisitive faculty which render children of that age so endearing and delightful. The finery of her sister's new gala-dress naturally attracted attention; and her little hands were clapped as she gazed on brilliants less sparkling than her own eyes. Mary was charmed with her caresses and artless admiration; but she observed, "Surely she will love me to-morrow, when I have got plain clothes, which will certainly be the case, as I could not, otherwise, enjoy myself in my old haunts, or enter on my old occupations."

"How strange," said Ulrica, "that you can for a moment think of relinquishing a dress which becomes you so well, and is also the insignia of your rank!—it appears to me to be the only thing for which I have a right to envy you."

"You shall wear this finery the rest of the week, if you please, Ulrica; and long before the end of it you will discover that what is very suitable for days of state is very inconsistent with domestic comfort. One ornament I am not permitted, as empress, to abandon when at home; but here that also is at your service, since our dear parents have promised me a week of privacy and love."

Ulrica accepted the offer, though sorry to hear the latter part of her sister's speech; but her observations were interrupted by the princess, their mother, who, referring to the child, said to Mary,

"You are naturally delighted with your little sister, my love, and doubtless well remember how solemnly the dear empress placed her under your care. I trust you will be able to fulfil to her a mother's duties; but yet I do not wish her to be brought up in the court, much less married there; not but good people may be found in that situation, and then they are as gold seven times tried. Endeavour, my dear, to impart to her religious instruction, as you received it from me, when I had time and strength to explain the Scriptures as our good Brucken-thal explained them to me."

The empress looked at her mother, and, notwithstanding the calmness with which she spoke, saw but too clearly that the event so long dreaded had now nearly arrived. The insidious complaint, increased if not caused by anxiety, had now assumed a mild but determined form, and stolen upon her, unsuspected by her family, who considered her weakness only the effect of general delicacy of constitution, and the solicitude she felt for her husband. Her extreme attenuation, the transparency of her skin, the hectic flush so subject to rise and decay, told even the inexperienced Mary that all rational hope must be abandoned; and she retired to her bed with that weight upon her spirits such a conviction could not fail to produce.

Thoughts of Theodore also mingled with this sorrow; and memory, as if endued with new power from her approach to the scene of her agonized parting, recalled every circumstance of that dreadful evening to her mind with terrific truth and distinctness. She determined on

rising very early, and proceeding, unseen by all, to the very spot in the gardens where she had last beheld that dear countenance, and listened to that voice which was alike music to the ear and heart of one so devoted, and recall every particular of the manner in which he was torn from her so cruelly, to be murdered on the instant. It is one of the peculiar characteristics of the human heart in early life, that it thus seeks to awaken and recall its own sensations when they are of the most afflictive character; to lacerate the wounds which time had somewhat healed, and again crush the bruised spirit to the earth. Surely this is a part of that generous self-abandonment and even immolation which belongs only to the young, who, in their zeal to honour the object they lament, care not how much suffering they heap on their devoted heads, enlarging the load under which they shrink, not with a view to end, but gratuitously increase its pressure, as being a due sacrifice. In after years, either from a weariness of pain, a blunted sensibility, and somewhat more of selfish wisdom, even the most attached and amiable natures avoid the penance of such inflictions. Perhaps we then feel that we have suffered enough; that a state of being so nearly over demands no farther draught from the cup of sorrow.

Like many persons who spend the night in restlessness and feverish grief, the young empress slept heavily in the morning, and, on awaking, became sensible that her purposed walk in privacy was, for the present, frustrated, as the hour was late, and the inhabitants of the palace were stirring. On the entrance of her attendant, she thought there were more symptoms of bustle in the household than common, and believed visitors were arriving, to her great annoyance; and while dressing, she inquired of her woman if such were the case.

"Count Mariskin and General Devrier, an-please your majesty, have been here half an hour, and are with my lord the prince in the library, and very much flushed he appeared when, by chance, I had a look of his highness's countenance."

The attendant's words (which had been uttered in a low voice, and with an air of mystery and fear) were now interrupted by an exclamation of Menzikoff's, who was traversing the adjoining gallery. "My daughter, the empress, accompany me, and proceed to a seat, which is the distance of more than two hundred versts; really, count, this part of your mission is incredible! For myself, my wife (though sick), and my children, of course, we obey the will of the emperor; but for—"

A strange and apparently sympathetic voice checked this saffy, and answered in a low, yet probably peremptory tone; for, in another moment, the steps returned, and Menzikoff rushed into his daughter's dressing-room. His countenance was inflamed, his eyes shot fire, and his tall form was dilated by rage, which was yet controlled by pride that restrained the expression of his anger, lest it should also display his sorrow.

Mary flew towards him, eager to restrain the boiling fury menaced in his gestures; and, though trembling exceedingly for the future, aware that the present might render all that was bad still worse. The storm she had long dreaded for him appeared to have suddenly de-

scended upon him, but to have been pointed towards her. Eagerly dismissing her woman, and carefully closing the door, she looked fondly into her father's face as she threw herself on his bosom, and inquired into the cause of his surprise and vexation.

Menzikoff burst into tears as he folded her to his bosom.

Mary was now seriously alarmed: she felt assured that this speechless agony was endured for herself and her sorrows, and that her liberty, perhaps her life, was menaced.

Often had she thought, in her days of apprehension, that she could willingly lay it down for the sake of securing the safety and welfare of her beloved family, feeling, as she did, that to her it was of little value; but now that the axe seemed really uplifted, life was sweet and death terrible. Determined, however, to know the worst, she gaspingly inquired in what way she was to be rendered a victim.

Menzikoff saw the deathly paleness of her countenance, and compelled himself to answer.

"The emperor has banished me to my principality of Plescoff, with all my family—even you! *you*, the empress, whom he designates my eldest daughter. The snivelling brat! who made him emperor!"

Mary burst into hysterical laughter, mingled with sobs and tears; a scaffold or a dungeon, contrasted so strongly with a fine castle in a beautiful country, far from the dull formality or malicious trickery of a despotic court, surrounded by beloved relations and thankful dependants, that she was violently affected in the relief she experienced. So soon as she could regain the power to speak, she drew an eloquent picture of the happiness they should all enjoy, and warmly thanked the emperor for his kindness in removing her with her family, and enabling her to attend to her mother. "And oh! dear father," she added, most soothingly, "what a fine place you will make of Plescoff! another St. Petersburg will rise at your bidding; your serfs will be delighted to enjoy your personal command, and the climate will benefit my mother; shall I break the intelligence to her?"

"Yes; go, child, go; leave me, and let no one intrude; I shall soon conquer this emotion. It is one thing to banish me, another to subdue me, as the Dolgouroukii shall see."

Mary repaired to the couch of her ailing mother, who was already prepared, by the looks of her servants, for evil news, and, therefore, felt with Mary that, however it might mortify the pride and disgust the feelings of her husband, many blessings remained to him and to them all, since his wealth would ensure to him the power to improve to its utmost a beautiful and extensive district, where he would reign in all but name a sovereign, and transmit to his son the fruit of his energies and his abilities. Yet, even while she thus reasoned, she feared the haughty soul of her husband would never stoop to mediocrity after he had for so long a period enjoyed, in fact, supremacy of power. Noble as was the inheritance to which he was banished, would he bear to be confined to its limits? might he not degenerate into a petty tyrant purely by way of occupation, and extend the severity of such sway over those children whom he had hitherto been too busy to notice? Or who should say what schemes of revenge might not arise in the breast of one still powerful in his wealth, in his

courage and abilities, and so long the idol of the soldiers? From this, of all other horrors, her gentle and virtuous bosom shrunk. "May God preserve him from guilt!" was her first and her most ardent prayer; in all else her meek spirit said, "His will be done!"

Reflecting on that awful period in their history when this very Plescoff had been taken from her husband by Peter the Great, when charging him with peculations he despised, and that the following day it was restored to him with additional honours, she could not help hoping, through the whole of this day, messengers might arrive from the palace to reverse the command of the morning, which she understood to be "the removal of the Prince Menzikoff and his family in twenty-four hours," and which command he was evidently preparing to obey, from the confusion in the household. So warmly did the young empress express her satisfaction in being included in their removal, that she could not bring herself to desire an especial recall for her; yet was she alike sorrowful and indignant, that one so innocent and blameless, so fitted to adorn her station, and render it a fountain of beneficial deeds to millions, should be exposed to obloquy by implication, and rendered an inevitable sharer in the future fortunes of her family; true, her presence with that family might soothe many pains, and perhaps prevent many mischiefs.

As the anxious wife, the drooping invalid, thus reasoned, feared, and hoped by turns, alaying the sorrow of her astonished son and younger daughter, and endeavouring, as had always been her wont, to tranquillize the tempest in her husband's bosom, and support him under the bitter mortification he experienced (well knowing that, however averse to her advice, he had always accepted consolation at her hands), the hours wore away, and no succeeding messengers arrived to supersede the messengers of the morning, or even lengthen the term which was, so unreasonably short for the removal of such an establishment. True, when Menzikoff had calmed down the turmoil of his soul with that self-command for which he had been remarkable in the field of battle, and the contentions with this fiery-minded master, he had gone forth to his servants and dependants, and given orders with a precision and promptitude indicative of surprising calmness. Every one was full of conjecture as to the cause of this sudden journey, and the events that it might produce. Many thought that their great master must be recalled in a few weeks, since his loss in the business of the government would soon be felt; others believed that he was sent to perpetual exile, since the star of the Dolgourouki, having gained the ascendant, would be likely to keep it, for they were many, and the prince was only one. Yet rapid changes might take place—the emperor was very ailing—his heirs, the Holstein family, were not beloved—great changes might arise—it was better to remain with him than desert him—"a shaken house was not always a falling one."

What accusation had been made respecting the prince by those who named his punishment (if any) never transpired, for no one durst ask, lest they should recall his rage, or increase his grief; but when he, after long, necessary absence, repaired to the boudoir of the princess, Mary, wrapping herself in a dark booshe, stole forth, as she had intended, and visited that

well-remembered spot, to which she must now bid an eternal farewell. She opened the door near which she had sank in that long swoon, which she had often wished had proved fatal, and cast her eyes over that waste of waters, in which she believed the bones of her beloved Theodore were then whitening. That his body had never been cast up she was certain, since his disguise was not so complete as to have prevented all recognition; and, as his family could not have heard from him, such a circumstance would not have failed to alarm them, and cause the strictest inquiry. But might not his friend, who witnessed the transaction, have recovered these precious remains! might he not have rescued and even preserved his life! Oh, no! swathed as she had seen him, that was impossible; and she felt that it was wrong in her to suffer her mind to waste its powers in vague conjectures at such a time as this.

"Surely," said she, "my duties call me to far other employ than the wild reveries of a love-distracted brain! It is little to be divorced from honours I neither desired nor enjoyed, since the emperor can lay nothing to my charge; but it is hard to witness the degradation of my father, thereby hastening my mother to the grave, and condemning his children to comparative obscurity. On Ulrica's account, for the present, it is the most to be lamented, for how would the dear girl have graced a different scene! how world she have enjoyed the splendours of a court, and what may not a spirit so aspiring suffer in her enforced solitude!"

It was late in the night before any of the family sought their pillow, and for their domestic servants there was no rest. An increasing gloom burdened the heart and shadowed the brow of Menzikoff; but he bore his sorrows manfully, and tried, at times, to cheer Ulrica, who, as the empress predicted, felt this stroke perhaps as severely as her father, whom, in disposition, she greatly resembled. The unconscious child alone slept soundly; but such were the personal sufferings of its mother in consequence of the shock she had received, that she almost forgot every other trouble; for there are times in which the soul, even when most happily directed, and most earnestly called on for faith and fortitude, must stoop to the feebleness and partake the pains of its earthly suffering companion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALTHOUGH the beauties of Russia's short summer had departed, in the eyes of our banished family, thus forcibly driven from their paradise, Oranienbaum never looked so beautiful as now; and those of the princess, notwithstanding all her self-control and heavenly resignation, filled with tears as she looked once more from the windows where she had sat so often with the royal donor. She was roused from her reverie of grateful regret by her sweet infant, who, in imperfect words, called her to a different prospect.

The princess and her daughters, though all deeply affected, and nearly overpowered by the troubles of quitting a home so dear, obeyed the summons of little Catherine, and were astonished to behold such a cavalcade of carriages and

horsemen entering the *porte cochere* as they had never seen before; it immediately struck the princess that the emperor had come in person to claim her daughter, and reconduct her in state; and she felt that if she could see him—if she could plead her husband's cause, all would be soon forgotten, for Peter once had loved her as a mother; but no; the carriages were their own, the numerous body of attendants their own servants and serfs, dressed for the occasion, and, together with numerous grooms and led horses, swelling the train, and giving to the banished courtier the air of a triumphant conqueror.

"This is great—this is noble!" exclaimed Ulrica; "how admirably has my dear father rose victorious over his enemies!"

"Alas! how like a child you talk, Ulrica; these ill-judged proceedings will give your father's enemies new subjects for slander, and probably it may be the cause of prolonging his banishment from the court, or otherwise injuring him greatly. I grieve to see it exceedingly; it neither suits our circumstances, nor that which ought to be the temper of our minds under inflicted punishment."

"It suits *my* views and *my* means," said the prince, haughtily, as he entered the room while his wife spoke; "and I expect—nay, I insist, that yourself and your daughters shall go forth in your most costly apparel. Let the criminal hide his head, or creep through his path in obscurity—I have committed no crime, save fighting the battles and extending the civilization of my country. She has given me wealth—it shall flow for her benefit—therefore do I enter my principality with due splendour."

"But surely, dear father, it is possible to maintain your dignity without adopting additional ostentation, when your sovereign (however unjustly) has thought proper to degrade you? I greatly fear this parade will be reported, and do you no good," said the empress.

"I intend it to be reported to the Czar; and, thanks to the sovereigns who preceded him, I am enabled to do honour to Plescoff, and ask no assistance at his hands, though he has thrown his wife a beggar upon mine!"

Mary was about to say, "Though you desire no good, you should avoid provoking evil;" but the latter part of his reply, together with the expression of his countenance, which was terrible, and that of her trembling, almost fainting mother, prevented reply, and she suffered her attendant mechanically to arrange her outward clothing. Ulrica had taken possession of her royal ornaments and dress before this affliction had been announced the preceding day, and her distress had not prevented her from resuming it, a circumstance not noticed by the owner till she found herself wrapped in her sister's pelisse, when she said, with a faint smile, "What a bad time is this, my dear, in which to play the empress! all but externals are gone, most probably forever!"

"I shall be seen—perhaps pitied and admired; that is something to one who is bidding the world farewell."

"Yet we are making so grand a cavalcade, pity seems excluded, and only admiration invited. Alas! I fear—I greatly fear we are only taking the first step in degradation: God only knows what is before us!"

The empress checked her lamentations, for she saw too clearly that her mother's fears were still greater than her own, and that her heart sunk beneath its own predictions, which had now entirely banished her sorrow at quitting

Oranienbaum, and subdued the hopes she had sought to cherish on behalf of Plescoff. Places lose their hold on the mind when persons become the objects of our solicitude: her husband and her children alone filled the heart of the princess. However blameless, or even meritorious, the former might have been in his conduct towards his sovereign, still he was at this time under an interdict, which it became him to submit to modestly, as the subject of an absolute monarch, and which it was folly to resist in a country governed by the simple will of its ruler, amenable to no law, owning no restraint of justice, or shadow of remonstrance. An air of rebellious defiance to the governing power must be read by the most ignorant in this splendid display of wealth derived from recompense, not birth; and it at once reminded the great of what they deemed his unworthiness, and the little that one of themselves had been placed immeasurably above them.

When all was arranged, Menzikoff himself carried the princess to the litter prepared for her by his orders with the utmost care, and in which her eldest daughter had already placed herself at the feet of the couch on which her mother was laid. The gorgeous train proceeded slowly, agreeably to the will of the presiding mind, as if to awaken inquiry and comment; and, from time to time, Menzikoff would mount his charger, and, as his person was well known, thereby identify himself with the procession. *Avant-couriers* had been despatched to secure horses the evening before, and every other thing which an active mind could foresee as necessary; but much inconvenience and discomfort must be necessarily encountered. Russia was not then what she is now; Peter the Great had made one excellent road between St. Petersburg and Moscow; but it was not provided with inns, and the post-houses were mean and filthy cottages, into which delicate females could not enter. Their bedding accompanied them; and when they arrived at a village or town, where it was possible to find roofs that would shelter so large a party, every dwelling was put in requisition; everything demanded was paid for with a lavish hand, but exacted with that air of command which belongs to royalty and despotic sway.

On the first day of their journey, the princess, notwithstanding her apprehensions, experienced that relief in breathing change of air so generally bestows; and Mary, with that proneness to hope which the young experience, thought that Plescoff would be restorative, and expatiated warmly on the pleasure of meeting Madame Rocales, of visiting their old pensioners, and realizing many a scheme for philanthropic purposes. The following day nearly quenched these hopes, and she saw but too plainly that her exemplary mother, so beloved by all and so capable of benefiting all, would do little more than find a grave in the principality of her husband. To ease her pains by the most sedulous attention, to treasure up her instructive words as the guide of her future life, and guard, so far as it was possible, the deep-felt anguish which, from time to time, gushed in tears to her eyes from her mother's observation, was her sole and unceasing employ; therefore she saw nothing without the carriage, which was closely curtained, either of the surprise and admiration excited by their appearance, or the manoeuvres by which the prince sought to increase its effects, when passing places of any importance.

Pleasant, though mournful, was much of their conversation to Mary, at such times as the prin-

cess was able to speak with ease, for it turned on the memorable journey which introduced them to Theodore Dolgorouki. From the time in which the young empress had quitted her father's house to become the wife of another, never had her mother ventured to allude to his life or death, or even name in her letters any circumstance which could, by possibility, bring him to the memory of one whose misfortune it was that she never could forget him, but for whose happiness it certainly was necessary to banish every recollection tending to injure, in her eyes, the husband and sovereign she was bound by her duty to love and obey. Thus renounced, and sent forth to fare as she might, without the shadow of a fault being laid to her charge, and when her late devotion to the emperor had risked her own life and saved his, the princess could not fail to consider her as once more a free agent, whose heart had a right to its own sad thoughts and tender sorrows. She knew there is a melancholy charm in dwelling on the excellent qualities of one to whom we have committed our happiness, and yielded the treasure of our early love and confiding tenderness; and in retracing, step by step, the nature of our first impressions, the development of a lover's character, his attachment and our own sympathies, there is somewhat of consolation to the fond and faithful heart, which, in such moments, can venture to look forward to reunion in a better and higher state of existence, and live, meantime, on memory of the past.

Every time when the prince held any intercourse with his wife, he, like the young empress, was struck with her increasing weakness; and his extreme anxiety to see her in her own dwelling, and under the care of that esteemed friend who had educated his daughters, made him very desirous to increase their speed; but this, it was found, she could not bear, and it would take nearly six days before they could possibly arrive. As the pride and *fierte* which possessed him wholly on their setting out had now greatly abated, his fears for her safety and pity for her sufferings had proportionably increased towards the wife he had never ceased to love, although he had often cruelly neglected; and he now determined to share her carriage and assist his daughter, although, from his tallness, he would be very uncomfortably situated.

Accordingly, on the third day, he contrived so to arrange matters that he could sit in the upper part of the litter, and vary the position of the invalid by sometimes supporting her head, or giving the medicines she might require, as directed by their medical attendant. His presence was so delightful, his little services so dear to the heart of the sufferer, that her spirits revived, and even her pale countenance seemed reanimated like a flower in the sunshine; and at the hour of noon she desired to have the curtains a little withdrawn, that she might look out on the country.

This could be best managed by Mary, who accordingly hastened to gratify her, but who, on looking around herself, was struck by seeing a number of soldiers advancing, and she instantly inquired if her father had expected them.

"Certainly not," replied Menzikoff, becoming as pale as the cheek reclining on his shoulder.

In another moment it was evident that they were surrounded by a numerous detachment, and a young officer presented himself at the opening, on seeing the situation of the princess, with an air of respect and compassion; he requested the prince to alight, as his mission was

immediately from the emperor, and of great importance.

"Was it a recall to the court? had a distant rebellion occurred? was the emperor conscious of approaching death, and desired to make reparation?" were questions rapidly passing the agitated mind of Menzikoff as he quitted the carriage, and followed the steps of this young officer and another (the Count Ramulakoff), both of whom had dismounted and walked to a little distance, evidently endeavouring to deliver their mandate far from the litter, and beyond the sick lady's hearing.

"Unquestionably there is a new war, and I am required to take the immediate command, for Lubitsch Dolgourouki is sick, and Ivan cannot be spared; I, the degraded, the insulted!" thought Menzikoff; and his spirit rising with the thought, he stepped hastily forward, saying rapidly and almost haughtily, "What says the emperor now?"

The tone in which the words were spoken banished the pity which the sight of the princess had inspired, and he was promptly answered.

"General Menzikoff, you and all your family are banished to Siberia; your property, of every description, wherever placed, is confiscated; yes, even your clothing and carriages. Two light wagons, now coming up, in which sheep-skin dresses are placed, will suffice for conveyance, as every attendant must return: my orders are peremptory."

As the officer spoke he displayed the command by which he acted, and which was seconded by the count; but no doubt of their authenticity had arisen, or could arise to the mind of the astonished and overwhelmed exile. "Siberia! Siberia!" were words that murmured on his lips, but no sound proceeded thence. That word, appalling to every Russian, seemed instantly to have frozen him into a statue, alike incapable of resisting or comprehending the command which had thus crushed him to the dust.

The eye of the alarmed wife was upon him; she saw instantly that a new and terrible misfortune had befallen them, and doubted not that it was a consequence of that splendid retinue and air of defiance he had so unwisely assumed. By a painful effort she called to the litter Count Ramulakoff, and inquired what was the will of the emperor.

In the fewest possible words, and in a tone of the truest sympathy, the terrific mandate was revealed.

"But my daughter, count! my pure, my faultless daughter! she cannot be sentenced to Siberia!"

"I grieve to say, madam, every child of Prince Menzikoff's is banished with him."

"Be it so; none of my children will desire to leave so good a father, and so great a man."

The princess spoke with dignity, and essayed to rise and quit the carriage, but she was much too feeble to effect her purpose, and he who might have been termed her executioner hastened to assist her; but a great cry was now heard, the shrieks of women, the curses of men, the military word passing, the click of arms, and the trampling of horses. Amid all, the mother's ear distinguished the cry of Ulrica, and she dreaded that her child was suffering personal insult; but it was said, by a soldier near her, that the young empress had fainted, and restoratives could only be found in the litter.

The shock she had received and the effort she had made exhausted the princess, and she too

became insensible, and was carried in that state to the nearest wagon, in which her medicine-chest was placed, and a blanket thrown over her. In this vehicle were found clothes of the same kind as the peasants use in Siberia, consisting of sheepskin waistcoats and drawers, with the wool inward, and outer cloaks of a coarse texture, together with visors, gloves, boots, and bonnets; all of which were now drawn out and placed in a temporary tent, into which Ulrica, Catherine, and her maid, were taken.

At the time when Mary saw that the officer was supporting her mother, and several females hastening to her assistance, she flew to her father, and, throwing her arms around him, besought him, by every term of endearment her overflowing love and pity could supply, to recall his senses, and in this hour of agony so to act as became a man capable of bearing alike the good or evil of temporary existence. She conjured him not to add to the misery of her mother's few remaining days that of believing he could not survive his misfortunes, but would leave his wretched children to perish in the deserts of Siberia; whereas nothing could be more probable than his recall at no distant period, when, like their friend Madame Balke, he would find life more sweet than he had ever known it.

The word *recall* acted as a spell on the mind of the bewildered man, and, suddenly resuming the courage of his sex and the pride of his nature, he stalked, in majestic silence, towards the wagon in which they were then placing his wife; but a new trial awaited him on being required to enter the other vehicle, in order to assume the rough habiliments prepared for him, and which his heart-broken son was now clothed in. The empress, dreading an explosion of temper, which might increase his cruel punishment (for she had perceived that iron fetters were dangling from the arms of a soldier near the wagon), by her piteous looks, told him to preserve himself, and once more induced his self-command, and then entered the tent for the same purpose. The subaltern, who guarded the place, said, "The young empress had compelled them to oblige her maids to undress her, but he hoped she would submit to that which, on his part, could not be helped."

The true empress saw, indeed, the necessity for submission, and it was more for the sake of others than herself that this humiliating decree was felt galling. A little recollection showed her the necessity of adopting the change of clothing rapidly, and with her own hands, since the more entirely they were stripped of property, the more necessary was it that she should retain that secret gift of the emperor's to herself, respecting which no demand was made, notwithstanding its great value. Much as she trembled, and greatly as she was agitated by the complaints of Ulrica and the cries of little Catherine, who was sorely annoyed by her uncouth garments, she was yet enabled to get on the sheepskins, and hide the jewels effectually. Having done this, and placed her costly-furred pelisse in the hands of the officer, she was soon seated on the floor of the wagon, with her mother's head in her lap, her father sitting opposite, motionless, tearless, like one horror-stricken by her affecting appearance; and, though suffering in every nerve, on the very rack of misery, yet determined to endure in silence.

But there was again a wailing and lamentation that rent the air, and which no command

could control, all-powerful as was then the power of man over his weaker companion in Russia. The princess, kind and considerate to all, was beloved to adoration by the females of her household, most of whom had been long in her service. Torn thus suddenly from her and those idolized children whose first wants they had supplied, whose first steps they had guided, they were wild to madness in grief, and howled like very maniacs in their desire to look once more on their "angel mistress." Their request was denied in pity to its object, who was evidently unequal to enduring more, and whose soul drunk the dregs of the cup of sorrow, as she faintly waved her handkerchief in token of the only farewell, the only thanks she could tender to their love and their sorrow.

The long file of carriages, servants, and horses; the vans filled with clothes, bedding, and quantities of costly plate; the weeping and ruined servants, both high and low, under the guardianship of a body of soldiers, now returned the way they came, being, indeed, for the most part, as slaves confiscated with other property. The physician and other gentlemen who had made part of the retinue, most of whom were foreigners, considered themselves ruined by the change thus suddenly forced upon them; but compassion for the greater sufferers superseded self-commiseration, and indignation swelled in every bosom, though silence sat on the tongue; for never had despotic power wielded its iron arm with more terrible efficiency than now. The voice of a feeble boy, influenced by one insidious enemy, thus doomed to instant destruction and lingering misery a man who was one of the best generals in Europe, a persevering legislator and civilizer; a man whose immense wealth was dispensed with liberality and splendour, and whose genius, manifested in all the details of government, both at home and abroad, reflected honour on his country, and would, in time, have bestowed even on her lowest children those blessings she is only receiving now.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THERE are some sorrows of so heart-rending a nature, some afflictions so distressing and complete in the suffering they inflict and entail, that when we look back upon them in our own lives, or observe their descent in the lives of others, we are apt to wonder how human nature could possibly bear up against them, and to feel surprised that life did not give way beneath a blow so severe or reiterated. Young people are constantly heard to say (and they sincerely believe what they assert), "such and such misfortunes would certainly have *broken their hearts*;" and they appear to infer from these premises, that there is a deficient sensibility in those hearts which remain unbroken. Let them live on a few years longer, and the poor victims will probably learn how much they can endure and yet live.

When Mary lost Theodore—lost him under such dreadful circumstances—she thought her heart was broken, yet she lived—lived! to behold this total wreck of all to which that heart still clung with such fond affection; and she now felt certain that, weak as she yet was from her late disorder, she must still live. Not yet eighteen, she was called upon to be a veteran in suffering, and to sustain the spirits of those who,

in the common course of events, should have supported hers.

Perhaps the very extremity of the case, the utter hopelessness and increasing misery of the time, compelled her mind to that exertion which matured it by calling alike her affections, memory, and judgment into action—to sink into utter despair would be to desert both parents in this hour of extremity—it would be to find the ease of apathy to the mind, the death of cold to the body, at the expense of leaving them to unmitigated sufferings. Mary could not do this; horror-struck and trembling for the future as she must be, her generous, unselfish nature could forget all personal ills for the present, all fears for the future, appalling as that future was, in the one great care to manifest a daughter's devotedness and unutterable love.

Mary at length spoke, and her father listened. She inquired what route they were taking—what country they were likely to be dropped in—and expatiated on the happiness of escaping condemnation to the mines, and the relief she had experienced when the fetters held by a soldier were deposited in the other wagon. Menzikoff shuddered, and the princess devoutly "thanked God," in a low, but fervent aspiration. Mary, glad to receive from either any symptom of attention, again aroused herself to speak on every subject which could act encouragingly on their spirits. "Herself and Ulrica," she observed, "were young and healthy, and could wait on their parents; her brother was advancing towards manhood, most amiable in disposition, and would be able to assist their father; while sweet Catherine would be the solace of her mother's solitary hours, and, indeed, the charm of all their lives."

"Mary! Mary! you talk yourself like a romantic child," said the prince. "Siberia never had, never will have, anything like a charm: it is a desert of eternal snow, a hell upon earth, which fiends people with victims."

Terrible groans succeeded his words, and he covered his face with his hands, as if fearful that its expression should be witnessed. Undoubtedly he now remembered, in the bitterness of remorse, the persons he had sent there in the days of Catherine, for trifling censures of his conduct, or deprecations of his pride; and, although they were in many instances recalled, and even now were returning, how many of their dearest ties might be broken—how many, ruined in health and circumstances, would wear out the remainder of a long life among a people who would curse his memory, and might prevent his recall—the agony he now suffered shook his very frame convulsively, and Mary dared not speak again.

They were still on the great road to Moscow, which it would take three days more to reach, though a soldier was sent forward to procure relays of horses. Having stopped for a change at a post-house where the princess, with great difficulty, procured a little water, Menzikoff somewhat roused himself from the state of morbid misery from which he had suffered many hours; and Mary, who had watched him as a mother watches a sick child, took courage to say,

"Dear father, cruel as the emperor has been, we are not left to poverty; for he gave me, with much secrecy, and an injunction to tell no one, a brilliant necklace of great value; it will be riches to us all in Siberia."

Both parents eagerly told her neither to mention nor show these diamonds to any human

being, as they would answer no other purpose than that of tempting the cupidity of some poor wretch, who, in his turn, would find them useless. A small quantity of the lowest coin would be far more valuable in Siberia, and this the government would furnish on their arrival in Moscow.

"Not," added the princess, "that I have been robbed as the rest were, for my purse (which is tolerably filled) is yet in my pocket, and I have a diamond brooch which fastens the collar of my shooobe: remove it, Mary, or it may catch the eye of the soldiers, and they may deem it their duty to put me also into sheepskins, which would be hard to bear in my weak state."

Mary saw that so soon as they were able to converse on their desolate condition, and contrive the means of softening its horrors, a great point would be gained; and silent tears coursed down her cheeks as her heart ascended to heaven in prayer for blessings on her parents. She felt that her mother understood and thanked her for every mark of self-conquest her filial tenderness suggested, and this was a motive for perseverance. "Surely," thought she, "my father will struggle through the darkness that now settles on his bosom and threatens his reason—he has seen the folly of resistance, and will do nothing that will increase his punishment. Oh! that I alone could bear the infliction caused by his angry passions!"

A long, weary night ensued, in which they were not removed from the wagons, ill as the princess was. Salted provisions and liquor were brought to them, which at this time they could not eat, but which were accepted courteously by Mary. Low sighs, indicative of suppressed suffering, sometimes issued from the lips of the princess, but no words were spoken; for the prince continued silent, and they both hoped that he slept. Alas! his torn, remorseful, and indignant bosom harboured far different guests to those which "steep the spirit in forgetfulness."

At last Menzikoff began to speak; and to the great relief of his apprehensive wife and daughter, it was not to curse. He descended very naturally on all he had done for Russia. His hard-fought battles; his successful manoeuvres; his inexhaustible activity in the building of St. Petersburg and Cronstadt; his difficulties with Peter the Great; his success in placing Catherine on the throne, in which she governed so mercifully and so well; his love for the present emperor, whose health he had guarded with parental tenderness, and whose mind he would have imbued with the noblest patriotism, had his views been seconded, and for whom, even now, he felt pity and contempt rather than anger and indignation, since he considered him to be the tool of another and far more malignant spirit. He protested that, from the time when Peter the Great called him, a merry, unambitious boy, from a happy servitude, thereby awakening the aspirations of pride, vanity, and self-love, leading him into the excitements of war and the intrigues of courts, he had ever been faithful to the sovereign he served and the country he loved. "For that love of learning," said he, "which has made me repeatedly a successful diplomatist, and enabled me to avert the horrors of war, I was indebted to Bruenthal, who first taught me to read and write, but all else was communicated by Peter himself, who loved me, and listened to me, as many know who were doomed in his moments of rashness and ferocity. He taught me to love my country, and to labour

for it; to seek the glory of its name in war, and the happiness of its people in peace; and never have I swerved from that principle, nor will I be compelled to witness such as I have been compelled to witness, and tremble to recollect, should not induce me to tamper with the fidelity of a soldier, or—"

"Dear, *dear* Alexander," cried the princess, "thank you for this welcome declaration; it makes me happy, even here." Menzikoff continued:

"In placing Catherine on the throne, perhaps I did use my influence somewhat farther than I ought, and certainly to my own injury with the old nobility; but I well knew that what she promised she would perform, and abdicate when Peter was of age. I also knew her husband intended her to reign. I was right, as she has proved by her conduct—the annals of her short sovereignty show what I could do, and what I did do, for my country—the annals of the present reign will show what I can suffer. Certainly, Peter's reign of one year has effected what Catherine's reign of two years never dreamed of. Let future ages tell my story; and, while they relate his injustice to me, his ingratitude to the wife I gave him, his folly in obeying young Dolgourouki, when old Dolgourouki would—"

The very name, in a moment, destroyed all the calmness of him who uttered it; yet, from the highest motives, he forbore to utter the invectives which laboured in his breast, and sprung instinctively to his tongue. The sacred presence of his suffering and patient wife; the beseeching eyes of his injured daughter, to whose ear the name of his enemy and her own was still sacred; and, perhaps, the deep, deep scorn which even exceeded his anger and hatred, contributed to impose silence upon him at this juncture, and, after a few groans, which might be considered as bitter execrations smothered in their birth, he relapsed into a silence so gloomy and profound, that, like the preternatural darkness of Egypt, it was a silence "that could be felt," and his companions dared not to break it.

In the accompanying carriage sat Ulrica, Alexander, and little Catherine; the former unceasingly weeping and lamenting the fate which had cruelly cut her off from all that made life desirable, just as she was entering on its pleasures; while her brother, who was somewhat recovering from the blow which had stunned him, endeavoured to soothe her sorrows, that he might be enabled to collect his thoughts and obtain fortitude to meet the fate before him. The poor child, annoyed with her uncouth clothing, disgusted with the strange food which even hunger could not induce her to eat as yet, and crying incessantly for nurse or mamma, yet found refuge in sleep. When looking upon her, all of the man in his nature, which poor Alexander had tried to call into action, vanished; to see so young and innocent a sufferer condemned to endure privations love could not relieve, nor reason soothe, completely overcame him, and he wept over the sleeping child in the very extreme of misery.

The second night they stopped at a miserable dwelling, resembling that where Mary had last beheld Theodore, and well remembered that an act of humanity, on his part, towards the serf that inhabited it, had drawn her attention to the graces of his person and manner. Here some bread of a better quality was procured by the officer who was their escort, and partaken by all save the princess, who vainly endeavoured

to eat, in order to comfort those around her; but Mary hastened to make her gruel of prepared materials accompanying her medicine-cheat. The officer and his men slept on the floor, save two, who, with presented arms, stood over them, and appeared so ashamed of their office, that the empress and her mother exchanged looks which said, "now is the truth of your father's profession seen: how soon might those men be prevailed on to turn their arms against their fellows! and, were we once more in Petersburgh, the very sight of Menzikoff in sheepskins would rouse the blood of his own veterans, and make a revolution in the empire." "Oh! keep thy servant from presumptuous sins," was the fervent prayer of the Christian wife; and truly thankful did she feel when she saw the head of Menzikoff drop on his folded arms, and, as she trusted, saved by slumber from temptation. She knew not that a cordon of peasants were even then drawn round the cottage by their careful guardian.

The close of another day of wearisome misery brought them to Moscow, where they were lodged in the public prison, and closely guarded. Here they expected some days' rest; but, on the contrary, were hurried away before the morning light, and placed under the guardianship of another but smaller body of soldiers, and another officer.* They regretted parting with the first, who had been uniformly humane and considerate; and Mary again trembled lest the fettters should be brought forth, having learned in the prison that it was when setting out from this place these dreadful badges of criminality were applied and riveted; but this trouble she was spared, and from the number of horses fixed to the wagons, it appeared an object to send them out of the country as speedily as possible, and with an air of great secrecy, as they had not been left alone with their jailers for a moment.

It was well for Menzikoff that he could not behold the towers of his native city, nor recall the pleasures of his infancy in passing by its fields and gardens—that not one who had gazed on his elevation with envy could look on his degradation with satisfaction—but, beyond this relief, every lamentable circumstance in their journey was dreadfully increased. The roads, at all times execrable, were rendered worse by the falling snow; and, although the vehicles in which they were placed were better calculated for encountering them than heavier carriages, they were necessarily subject to perpetual concussions, and there was no possibility of saving the invalid from severe suffering.

The sight of her reiterated, indeed, continual sufferings, drew frequent cries from Mary, who viewed her mother as on the rack, and curses ill suppressed broke from time to time from her father. "Why did the detested wretch not wreak his malignity and cruelty on me? I am a man, and could have borne his tortures, and he might have glutted his eyes with my writhing agonies; but thus to torment her—to aid disease,

and make the last sands of life run out in lingering misery—to do thus to one who never hurt a worm, who has healed and cherished so many in their sickness and poverty—oh, God! I cannot bear it! All else, all else, but not this, not this!"

As such exclamations burst from his lips, his wife would blame herself for having suffered a groan to escape, and assure him it was the effect of her own weakness rather than the pain she experienced. "To be sure," she would say, trying to smile, "Peter has paid me in strange coin for the *bondes* I used to feed him with when I was his pretty *woman*; but I will not name him again, lest I should not forgive him."

Day after day, and, when horses could be cured, night after night also, they travelled on, the cold increasing as they proceeded, and the brilliant aurora borealis supplying light to their guardians. For the first week or ten days Mary constantly expected her mother would scarcely survive for another hour, but, alas! she still lived to suffer. On reaching Nishnei Novgorod she had become so weak that she desired rather to remain than be carried into the house where they were to stop during the night; but, as it was only here and at Vladimir that stops which had the slightest appearance of comfort had been seen, Mary prevailed on her to remove, and she found great relief from obtaining an easy couch, and seeing her dear children around in health; and to a certain degree recovering the power of resistance to sorrow natural at their age, she expressed herself thankful to God, and earnestly besought her husband to improve and cheer his future solitude by religion, which hitherto the business and grandeur of life had hidden from his view.

Deplorable, indeed, is the situation of those who are compelled even by their love to desire the death of those who are inexpressibly dear; to whom the heart fondly clings, and on which the eye gazes as the dearest object upon earth. Yet on again setting forward, every one of this wretched family felt that for her it would have been far better to depart, since again the same cruel joltings, the same piercing air, the same soul-sinking objects were to be encountered; but she was still patient and almost cheerful, trying "to comfort her comforters."

In this state the two next days were passed with little change, their guard having been changed at Nishnei, and they were now slowly making their way up the mountains which divided them from the dreadful country they were doomed to inhabit. In the course of their long journey, Menzikoff, with the officer's permission, had frequently changed places with one or other of the young people, but Mary never left her mother. On the third day after leaving Novgorod, the princess expressed a great desire for seeing her son for a short time, adding, "go to your children, my love; the little one will amuse you, and dear Ulrica find comfort in seeing you."

The exchange was soon effected, for Alexander was now walking, which his father would have preferred, so slow and jolting was the motion of the wagons; but he obeyed the summons with all the alacrity of affection. The sight of his mother was, however, too much, and he took his place in silence, endeavouring to assist her position in the manner recommended by his father: a faint smile played on her features indicative of love and approbation.

"You complain not, dear mother," said the youth; "indeed, you never did complain; would

* Criminals sent to Siberia now are allowed a week's repose in the prison at Moscow; after which, the men have fettters put on their legs, and walk all the way, whether intended to work in the mines, to which murderers are condemned, or to colonize in the country: the women, who are criminals, walk also in a band, but wear no fettters. The wives who accompany their husbands do it by choice, and they can take their children by permission of their parish; these travel in carts, into which they are bound, the roads being terrible. It takes six months, within a week or two, for these wretched people to reach their destination; and must be a great infliction on the soldiers who guard them.—See an admirable work on Russia, by Robert Bremner, Esq., 1839.

that you could communicate some portion of your patient firmness to your children in this time of trial!"

"Receive this dispensation as coming from God, my love, and then doubt not that the chastening (grievous as it is) will be made a blessing. We are all humble when we receive affliction from our heavenly Father, and rebellious when we consider it the infliction of man, who is but a worm like ourselves. If you do not look to second causes, Alexander, you will have by prayer nearer access to that throne of grace in which you can put your trust without doubting. Remember your mother (that mother who is on the very threshold of eternity) told you to do thus."

There was a pause, for the fast flowing tears fell on the thin hand he was pressing to his heart, but after a time, his sobs subsiding, Alexander said:

"What else has my precious mother to leave as her command?"

"Comfort your father, by showing him you can do your duty cheerfully in the state to which you are reduced, and be cheerful, not only in seeming, but in heart, my dear boy, for youth comes to man but once, and it is life's season of joy, in which care and labour are easy, and simple existence sweet. Show your father that you are happy, and it will enable him to forgive the enemies who injure him through you. For your sisters I need not bespeak your love, but have especial regard to Mary, your sister and your empress; take her to your heart of hearts, my son; you must be the world to each other."

The princess stopped, overwhelmed with those feelings which drew her soul earthward, even when it most desired to take flight to those mansions where alone it could find repose; even now, in pain and sorrow, want, and often blindness,* she felt desire to live, and, by sharing their miseries, prove to them the undying, unalterable love of a mother; but she lifted the heart to heaven in prayer for resignation, and this, its latest agony, passed away. When she could again speak, she said to her son, "Kiss me, my love, and depart. I wish to have your dear father with me."

The youth obeyed in silence, for his sorrow was suffocating; and Mary, who saw that the hour so long expected, dreaded, and desired, was almost come, eagerly sought to receive instructions from those lips about to close forever.

"I have no new commandment for thee, my Mary, for all thy life thou hast read my heart, and knowest all it could tell thee. I commit to thy love thy dear, dear, suffering father, and my sweet babe, to whom thou wilt be a mother. And oh! Mary, be not less a sister to poor Ulrica; strengthen her mind by precept, by example, by employment; it is the idle only who in misfortune become entirely miserable."

Menzikoff now entered the wagon, and the sufferer found relief from being placed in his arms, and reclining her head on his shoulder.

"Thank you, my love," said she; "I shall manage very well; but yet I hope we shall stop somewhere in a few hours. Did you see anything in the distance like a village when you were out?"

"I saw nothing but snow—everlasting snow," he answered, with deep emotion.

"Then most probably we have entered the confines of Siberia. Well! well! remember, dear Alexander, your wife was willing to have lived with you and laboured for you even there.

Yes, she could have shared with you a mess of porridge, gladly; but I cannot say much—only, I am thankful our enemies did not part us. There is a God over Siberia—remember that, my love—yes, a God of mercy."

"How clear your mother's voice is become! How well she speaks!" said Menzikoff to his daughter.

"It has been so for the last two hours. She spoke in this way to my brother, and appeared no worse for the exertion."

"Yet the air is much colder. I begged hard that we might stop at the first place where there was a stove, but I know not whether my request will be complied with; these men's hearts are as rugged as the rocks we travel on—ha! what a shake was that; this road is worse than ever. Were you not hurt by it, my love?"

A short soft sigh was the only answer.

"Dear mother, we fear you were sadly shaken?"

There was no answer save another soft sigh, and all was silence.

"She sinks more heavily upon my breast. Open the curtain, Mary—look upon her face—the lights are abroad."

Mary did look, and saw that death had set his seal on that face, which was still calm and beautiful; yet she listened as if her very heart were all ear, to catch the recurrence of that last faint sigh: it came not, and in tremulous accents she exclaimed,

"Father! dear father, surely this is death!"

Gently as a mother moves her sleeping child did Menzikoff remove the now stiffening arm that encircled his neck, and lay the head upon the pillow of straw they had begged for her at the last resting-place, that he might ascertain whether Mary's conclusion was right, and if a swoon affected her mother.

This was no swoon: the king of terrors himself had welcomed them to Siberia, and claimed for his own the dearest and the best. Menzikoff had beheld his ravages in many a plain of blood, and seen many a fair youth, with the blooming features of early manhood, show beauty even in death; but a countenance like that of his once adored bride he had never beheld, so perfect were its lineaments, so saint-like its expression. Gently closing the eyes and mouth, he arranged all things around as well as he was able; then, kissing the marble forehead repeatedly and covering his face, seemed wrapped in meditation or prayer.

Mary, convinced that all was over, that she must never again listen to that dear voice, fulfil those requests it was the only consolation of her life to obey, wept as the young only can weep, with the full gush of passionate sorrow; nevertheless, she lifted not her voice in lamentation, she suffered no sound or murmur to escape her lips beyond the narrow space in which they were immured, or disturbed the sacred cares of her father, who, approving her self-command and participating her feelings, continued in darkness and silence to meditate on the dead; to own in utter prostration of spirit that she had been released from a terrible existence in mercy, but yet she was to them a loss as great as it was irreparable.

That other thoughts would rise in the breast of him who deemed her murdered—that the thirst for vengeance, the curses of a proud and almost frenzied spirit, would seek for vent in impotent yet natural imprecations, was Mary's fear, new that the wife he respected could no longer be afflicted by such vehement outbreaks of the tor-

tured spirit; but no! the presence of death is sacred, and the bereaved husband, the pitying father, felt its power.

He was, in truth, humbled under a deep sense of the chastisement of God towards himself, as a creature who might claim thanks from man for his zeal, his intentions, and in many cases his actions, but knew that before Almighty goodness he was a proud, sinful, erring creature, who could only in dust and ashes deplore the faults he had committed, the ambition he had fostered, the ingratitude he had evinced towards the providence which had elevated him, and the dear ear he had turned to the conscience which had forbade undue exercise of power, and to the virtuous wife who had so often tenderly and humbly remonstrated with him. Full of deep remorse and cutting self-reproach were the thoughts that passed through his mind, yet, if the departed spirit could have witnessed them, perhaps it would have deemed that many a heartfelt prayer, many an hour spent in bitter humiliation on behalf of a husband fondly loved yet justly blamed, were about to be answered.

CHAPTER XXV.

How long Menzikoff and his daughter had remained absorbed in painful meditation neither of them knew, but about midnight the driver of their wagons stopped and informed them that they had arrived at a village where it would be necessary to remain some hours; they might therefore take the advantage of rest and refreshment, though the place was, of course, exceedingly poor.

"Father," whispered Mary, "we cannot part with our dead!"

"Certainly not, my child—where we go thither shall she go, and at our home shall she be buried. But the poor children know not of their loss, and they had better take the advantage thus offered."

"Go to them, dear father. I will remain with my mother."

"Mother! thou hast no mother," said Menzikoff, and the long pent-up anguish of his heart burst forth in a flood of tears.

Alexander now came up to their wagon to inquire after his mother, and assist in carrying her to the post-house. Mary told him that she was not to be removed, and that she would herself remain with her, but urged him to go and take care of his sisters.

"You cannot remain alone; we are now in a fearful country; the wolves are abroad, and often visit these small villages; and the soldiers are so wearied none would engage to watch you, even if we had the power to reward them, which they know we have not. Let me come in and help to raise my mother."

At the word "wolves" Menzikoff roused himself, and suddenly darting from the carriage, he addressed the subaltern, under whose *surveillance* they were now placed, in a voice agitated by various feelings, yet heard distinctly in the stillness of the dreary plain around them.

"Young man, you have, I trust, a mother, or perhaps a wife; in either case, you can feel for these unhappy children, who have lost a tender parent, or for me, who am bereft of a beloved, an invaluable partner: as a man, I ask your pity; as a soldier, whose steps some of your

men have, perchance, followed to victory, I entreat due observance to the remains of Prince Menzikoff's wife."

Not one rough soldier in that wearied train but crowded in silence round the miserable vehicle, while the tears swelled in every eye; and the leader pressed eagerly forward to render personal assistance; but Menzikoff himself drew forth the light and wasted form of her who had been the grace of Peter's court, and with slow steps proceeded to the post-house, from which the inhabitants, with lights, were now issuing. Every soldier, with arms reversed and head depressed, slowly followed, while Alexander and Ulrica, thus suddenly informed of the fatal event, loudly bemoaned the dear mother whose corpse they closely followed. The lovely child, but half awake, was carried in the arms of the captain—the most innocent* captive ever doomed to the sufferings of an exile, and increasing the sorrow of all by her incessant inquiries for mamma.

The moon, hitherto obscured by clouds, heavy with snow, shone out upon that pallid corpse and the mourner who bore it; and he looked up to heaven, as if thankful for a single gleam of light on one so burdened with accumulated sorrows. The superstitious soldiery held the circumstance to be indicative of divine acceptance of the soul of the departed, and through her intercession to the degraded prince, whom they honoured as a brave man, and remembered as the generalissimo appointed by their greatest emperor; and they hastened to find the best dwelling in which to lay the body of the princess, and procure all of ornament the miserable village could produce wherewith to hallow the spot.

Thus to honour the dead will always be found grateful to the living, by whomsoever it is offered, and under whatever circumstances it is performed; and the warmly-expressed thanks of Menzikoff, his son, and even of the weeping Mary, were perhaps as welcome to the rough villagers and the weary soldiers as if they had been received from them in the palace of Oranienbaum, for they knew that they came from the heart. Every one considered the princess as a martyr to the fatigue and cold, from which she had so long suffered, and foretold that the bereaved husband would soon be also the bereaved father; and "God help him!" was echoed from heart to heart, and from lip to lip.

The officer's first care was to seek the village carpenter, who, with the celerity and ingenuity for which the Russian peasantry are remarkable, soon constructed a coffin and a bier on which to lay it, and attach it to the wagon; and, when completed, several matrons gathered round the door offering their services.

But the hands of her two fair daughters were sufficient to place the worn and shadowy form of the late princess in its last resting-place; and gladly would they have taken from their own persons grave-clothes, had any such remained; but they were thankful that her person had been held sacred; therefore the thin face was covered by the finest lawn, and her form wrapped in Genoa velvet; nor lacked there any accustomed rites in the absence of her train.

* Condemnation to Siberia divorces a man from his wife, but if wives request to accompany their husbands, they are permitted; and their children, in some cases, accompany them. Prince Menzikoff's whole family were condemned to accompany him.

At this place they had much longer time allowed for rest than heretofore ; and a sympathy soothing to the heart, if not healing, was found in the humanity of all around them ; but their physical evils were found to be greater than ever, in the intense cold, the darkness occasioned by the falling snow, and the utter dreariness of a wide, uninhabited country, offering no other view than a desolation that rested as a palpable burden on the stricken minds and weakened frames of our travellers. But Mary remembered her mother's words, and, in her love (that intense affection which was all that appeared not frozen in her system), she sought to sustain all, from the babe that slumbered in her arms, to the stricken father who now seemed subdued and helpless, as if the spirit which had once commanded millions had fled with that of the meek wife for whom alone he had exerted it.

Alexander tried to imitate Mary, and prevailed on his father to walk, which was found beneficial to them both ; the snow becoming deeper, and yet not frozen, the difficulties of the cattle were extreme. The females lay huddled together, often innately wondering at their own tenacity of life, but suppressing complaint as much as possible, and trying to calculate when they should reach another station. As poor Alexander could not walk so far as he wished, he was obliged to return to the wagon in a few hours, and then the father tried to attend to him and comfort him ; but he gazed at him mournfully, for he was very like his mother ; and, as he read her lineaments in his face, he thought his fate would also resemble hers. When, however, they arrived at a station, food and rest seemed to restore him ; and he became eager to learn where they were to be placed, and at length prevailed on his father to inquire of the officer, who could no longer have a motive for refusing to satisfy a curiosity so natural.

"I will inquire," said Menzikoff ; "indeed, I should have done so before, but that I feared to learn the painful information that we should not go near Tobolsk ; and, in this day's journey, I have become certain I was right. My enemies will not allow me to find a friend even in the desert."

"Is it then possible, father, that you should have friends in Siberia ?"

"I have friends in it, Alexander ; and, thank God, have been the means of drawing many wretched persons out of it, after the death of Peter the Great ! Would I had never sent one into it : the axe, the knout—ay, the rack, would have been more merciful."

"Say not so, dear father, because we shall all, I trust, come back alive, save my dear mother. But who are your friends at Tobolsk ? they are certainly not the people you sent."

"No ; they were the people I saved, when, after the terrible battle of Pultava, which was the best ever fought for Russia since it ruined the army of Charles of Sweden, the greatest enemy she ever had, and the greatest general the north of Europe has produced, I pursued the fugitives, and drove them to the banks where the Volga receives another river ; they knew not the country ; and, though falling in numbers, would not yield, till I found means to inform the officers of the utter destruction before them, on which they laid down their arms. These prisoners were sent to Tobolsk, and proved as good

citizens as they had previously been soldiers, for many of the officers became admirable schoolmasters, and the men were good builders and mechanics. Since then a treaty passed, which enabled them to return to their country ; but many had married, and were become thriving men ; they had conquered the evils under which they suffered at first, and are living there at present : they would be my friends, for they were brave men and good men."

"It is a precious memory, dear father, to your own heart ; I feel as if it warmed mine even here. Perhaps, when we are settled, they will permit us to visit Tobolsk."

Menzikoff was silent ; the power of farther converse passed away ; and, in the depths of his own heart, he was probably considering how far the action to which he had alluded could compensate for the sins of pride and ambition, in which he had unquestionably indulged. His mind, uninstructed in religion, and feeling, for the first time, its importance, wandered about, vainly seeking repose, yet forming resolutions for the future, which were continually checked by the burning hatred, the prayer for vengeance, which perforce rose to his heart, and which this recollection of the past supplied. He believed it was his duty to subdue it, for his wife appeared to have done so ; and she was, at this time, his sole example of all that earth held excellent and Heaven approved.

But from this short conversation a sweet hope and holy ambition arose in the bosom of his son. "Who knows," said the amiable boy, "but I may, by degrees, get him thus to inform me respecting the past, and so win him from the present ! Oh ! if I could lighten the heart of my father—if I could chase the gloom from his brow, the sorrow from his wounded spirit, I should be happy even in Siberia ; and I am sure the blessings of my mother would be upon me, and Mary hold me to be the best of brothers."

On Menzikoff inquiring where they were destined to stop, the officer answered that Berenzof, on the banks of the Obi, was the nearest town, but that the exact spot could not be ascertained until they arrived there. "I doubt," he added, "you will find your habitation to be ten or twelve versts beyond that town ; but there is a village very near in which an officer resides, who will pay to yourself and each of your family the money necessary for your subsistence monthly or quarterly ; your dwelling is near a fresh stream that falls into the Obi, I have understood, but I must procure a guide at Berenzof."

With this scanty information onward they went, and three days after arrived at the town, where they slept, and would gladly have remained, for they deemed it the last spot in which even a glimmering of civilized life would ever be found to cheer and assist them ; and they had now a yearning after the society and even the sight of their fellow-creatures, such as those only who have been similarly situated can conceive ; and it was with increased dejection that they left a place in which there was not a human being calculated to converse with them, nor one dwelling but of the rudest and most comfortless description.

About the middle of the day, which was nearly five hours long at this period, they reached the village which had been mentioned, and were duly examined by the functionary, under

whose superintendence they were placed. He was a homely man, stupid, but not supercilious ; and he passed onward, in conversation with the officer, until he arrived at a spot to which he pointed, saying, " the house was in good condition, and had been inhabited very lately."

A dark spot, which was an extensive plantation of firs, was their guide to the house, which was evidently of the humblest description, but was neither small nor dilapidated. There was a large stock of firewood piled up near the door, a well-sized barn stocked with fodder, and a small, square erection, meant for a shelter to cattle, placed within an enclosure, intended for the purpose of a fold, and nearly enclosing the cottage. On this the eyes of Menzikoff immediately fell, and, on alighting, he went towards it ; and being apparently satisfied with his short survey, was returning to speak to the officer, when that gentleman, as if intuitively acquainted with his wishes, gave orders to his men in a few low words, and the coffin was instantly brought forward, and deposited in the shed.

Menzikoff knelt at the entrance, his children knelt around him, and the soldiers encircled them at a distance, while the officer proceeded to offer up prayers, such as are used in the funeral service which, under particular circumstances, it was his duty to perform. He spoke with solemnity and feeling, but the advancing night, the piercing cold, caused him to cut the ceremony short ; after a kind farewell to Alexander, which were all the words they uttered, the whole party had wheeled round, and were out of hearing, and almost sight.

Menzikoff arose from his knees, and saw himself alone in the world—*alone in Siberia!* that horror of every Russian. Alone ! ah, no : at this period he felt that the sufferings of his children gave tenfold anguish to his heart ; for himself, he could have borne it ; but these young, fair girls, so delicately nurtured ; that sweet child, the last gift of her departed mother ; that promising boy, now rising into manhood ; he who should have carried the name of Menzikoff down the stream of time*—for them, for *them* his agonies became greater than could be borne.

With a passionate gesture he waved Alexander from him, and signified a wish to be left alone, as he cast himself prostrate by the sepulchre of his wife ; all withdrew save Mary, and at her instance they hastened to the cottage, where the man who had shown them the way from Berenzof had already gone. They found him busied in lighting a fire for them, and he was not long in pointing out what he considered the many comforts of their habitation. Either moved by the circumstances of the princess's interment, or hoping to find employment from exiles appointed to inhabit a place so important in his eyes, he seemed willing to remain and be useful ; and, sunk as they all were into the abyss of despair, and worn out by the fatigue of travelling more than fifteen hundred miles, no wonder this poor man's presence and attention afforded them some degree of relief and consolation.

* Dr. Clarke became well acquainted with Princess Menzikoff at Moscow : he calls her "the granddaughter of Peter the Great's favourite," and speaks of her wit and beauty. She was undoubtedly the descendant of Alexander ; but, we should think, a granddaughter of his, as this was written in 1790. See vol. I., chap. v.

It was so evidently a blessing to them all that their beloved mother had not reached this awful termination of their journey, that Mary had one undeniable claim on her father for gratitude to God ; and, so soon as he was capable of listening to her, he arose, and, placing his hand on her shoulder, prepared to enter the miserable dwelling assigned him by that emperor to whom he had been a faithful servant and devoted friend, and who had torn him from the splendid palace given by his predecessor.

Bad as the hard, uneven floor and rough walls of the dwelling certainly were, yet they had seen many such on their journey ; the fire burned cheerfully, and its warmth suffused with a sense of life the benumbed limbs, and seemed even to reach the oppressed and leaden heart of the wretched exile. His son placed him the only chair in the cottage, and little Catherine, taking up a low stool, seated herself at his feet.

After sitting some time with his eyes closed, as if to gather support from within, or to exclude the sight of what was appalling around him, Menzikoff looked earnestly at the man who was drawing forward a rough, unplaned table from the wall, and inquired " how he came thither."

" I am Peter Feff, who came as your guide from Berenzof, an please you."

" You should have returned thither with the wagons."

" I have no great call there, or anywhere—wife and children are all gone—yes, *all ! all !*"

Every child instinctively pressed round their father ; the action said, " to you we are all left" —and the father smiled through his tears.

" Then, Peter, it seems you are willing to live with me even here ! but, alas ! I am poor, exceedingly poor ; I can give you no wages."

" The wages of a houseless serf are a roof and food."

" Food !" cried Menzikoff, starting on his feet, and first remembering those wants of nature which overwhelming misery had suspended ; " food, said ye ! I have not even *that* ; my children will perish in the wilderness."

" Not so, dear father," cried Mary ; " I know that bread and salted fish were put in the wagons at Berenzof, and here are cooking utensils on the stove ; if Peter will look for them, I will prepare our evening meal."

Peter was able to bring these, and a small cask of brandy also, which had been placed by the kind officer at the side of the medicine-chest. Homely as the provision was, since they had tasted none better for some weeks, all found themselves refreshed by it, and poor Peter gratefully blessed them for what he thought a feast. Menzikoff now inquired " what provision was made for their sleeping."

The ground-floor of the dwelling was divided into two unequal parts, in the larger of which the family had dwelt, the outer door being in the smaller, in which was convenience for a vapour-bath, that great and common Russ comfort. Over these rooms were two chambers, in each of which were two mattresses with coverings. The roof, though not ceiled, was well protected from the cold ; a ladder and trapdoor was the mode by which they were entered.

To one of these chambers repaired Menzikoff and his heir—that prince so well known in many a European court as the most splendid ambassador that ever represented the Czar of

all the Russias ; to the other went the beautiful and virtuous empress, the wife of him on whose dominions the sun never sets.

Yet they both slept as they had seldom slept before, for sorrow must have intervals, and exhausted nature seek reprisals. Both Mary and her father awoke refreshed ; but Alexander complained that " he could not sleep at all, and often wished he had never gone to bed."

And, alas ! it was only corporeally that strength was given ; for, as the mind grew sensible to the circumstances in which they were placed, it shrank from meeting the fate assigned them. Who among us, that has lost one near and dear to the heart, but must remember their sensations on awaking from sleep, when, by slow degrees, consciousness of their bereaved situation is revealed, and their loss brought home to the feelings by recollected circumstances ? Thus did the banished family recall the memory of the past : their mother was dead ! their father proscribed—banished ! his property confiscated ! his rank forgotten ! and even now they were in Siberia !

Poor Ulrica, as she rose shivering from her bed, dilated on each particular of their miserable situation, but at length paused, and looked to Mary for reply rather than consolation, for their case seemed to admit of none. The kind sister eagerly began to assure her that, great as their trial undoubtedly was, yet it was their duty to be thankful that it was no worse. " Our house," said she, " is weather-proof, with glass* in the windows, which is here a luxury : for, in general, the windows are filled with blocks of ice. We have abundance of fuel, and are sheltered by the neighbouring trees, which are very rare in this country. We have fresh water near us ; and, before our food is consumed, my father will be able to look out for more, which he has the means of purchasing. We are all here together, which is surely a great comfort ; and our dear, long-suffering mother has escaped from our distress, which ought to be a greater ; our very necessities, by inducing continual exertion, will enable us to forget our past situation, and in doing that we shall be enabled to bear the future. Think, dear Ulrica, how much worse things would have been if, in his rage at that ill-judged parade, the emperor had condemned our dear father to the mines !"

" Oh ! that is very true ; the bare idea makes one shudder with horror. I can see, dear sister, that if you (who have been, who still are an empress) can endure these awful changes without murmuring, I certainly ought to do so ; and, indeed, it is my intention to obey my blessed mother's injunction, and follow your example in all things ; but my hopes are so blighted, my mind so appalled, that I feel sick with fear and sorrow. I think I have not courage to live, yet to die in this miserable solitude seems dreadful —sure I shall lose my senses !"

As Ulrica spoke she clapped her hands upon her forehead, and Mary was struck with the paleness of her countenance and the heaviness of her eyes. Her inmost heart was smitten with the deepest pity for this sweet sister, thus cut off from all the pleasures of life before she had tried their vanity, and while imagination clothed them in their brightest hues. Her spirits high, and her heart proud by nature ; con-

scious of the beauty and accomplishments she possessed, and the advantages of her situation in life ; from the rank and talents of the father she fondly loved, and for whom she alone had never been apprehensive, misfortune had fallen upon her without any previous grief or anxiety, which might ameliorate its power by preparing the soil for its reception. In comparing the feelings of Ulrica with her own, Mary, while she clasped her fondly to her bosom, praised her good intentions, and sought to whisper comfort, might truly say, " It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

On descending, they found the day was advanced ; Peter had supplied the stove upon which he had slept, and was now beginning to look up the materials wanted for breakfast ; but Alexander, heavy and languid, sat stooping, as if incapable of exertion, though he had lately been so alert and desirous to walk. He appeared fretful and wayward, a disposition entirely new in him—complained of his father for lying long in bed, and said " he was uncomfortable from heat, yet the cold destroyed him."

When Menzikoff came down, his first care was to visit the shed where he had laid his wife, to see that the temporary door made the preceding night had resisted the cunning hyena, or the prowling wolf ; nor did he leave the spot till, with Peter's assistance, he had walled up the entrance, for which he found abundant materials at hand, having been collected by his predecessor probably to build a second cottage. The labour had somewhat roused his jaded spirits, and given him a sense of power to endure, to which, ever since the death of his wife, he had been a stranger ; and, on entering the house, he kissed all his children, and declared himself ready for breakfast, and that he should do the cooking of Mary credit. " But why," added he, " are you not assisting her, Ulrica ? we are all servants here, and must help one another !"

" My sister is unwell, and I have desired her to remain quiet," said Mary ; " I also fear Alexander is suffering, though he does not complain."

" What is the use of complaining—the climate admits of no alteration ?" said the youth, in a querulous tone, and with a husky voice.

" Little Caty very bad," said the sweet pet, as she sought a seat on her father's knee ; " her forehead hurt all over."

Menzikoff laid his hand on the child's head, and found it was indeed of a burning heat ; he looked from Alexander to Ulrica, and saw in each the same symptoms of alarming fever. Hastily calling to Peter, he inquired " if any such disorder were stirring in the country."

" We have that pestilence the smallpox on every side of us ; in the last ten days you have passed through many places likely to infect you all."

A cry of agony that would not be suppressed burst from the breast of Menzikoff ; the last drop was now wrung from the cup of misery, and the last vial of wrath (human and divine) seemed emptied on his devoted head. But yesterday, the presence of his children to his distempered mind appeared new sources of sorrow, but at this moment he felt that they were his heart's " manna in the wilderness," sources of delight and motives for exertion. Were these dear and innocent creatures to be thus afflicted, far from all medical help, all friendly attention ! were they to sicken and die, unaided and un-

* A beautiful mineral production of the country.

pitied, for whom so lately all Europe might have been ransacked for alleviation !

The cheek of Mary had blanched at the name of a disease from which she had so lately suffered ; but the remembrance that she had also seen it in all its stages and phases reassured her, and she eagerly sought to convey this assurance to her father. She reminded him also that, notwithstanding all their losses, her mother's medicine-chest remained, together with some preparations of food for the sick, and said that, with his assistance, she could nurse them through a disorder with which she was so well acquainted. Neither Menzikoff nor the patients could at this time listen to the words of Mary, for the very name of the disease had struck terror to their hearts ; nor could they conceive that it was possible to preserve life in a situation so utterly destitute of the means of help, knowing how frequently it was forfeited where all the aids of science and civilization were exhibited in vain.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PERHAPS the wretched Menzikoff was not aware of the deep, fond, overweening regard in which he held his son until the present time, when he feared to lose him ; yet, till their long and sorrowful journey, he might be said to have been almost a stranger to him. Handsome, though delicate, intelligent, sprightly, and yet gentle ; courageous, but pliable, there appeared in him the elements of all things good and great ; and it would have been possible for the afflicted father to have endured many years of exile, while the hope remained that his son would one day emerge from it to obtain the approbation of a repentant court, and the respect of an admiring world.

But the agonizing suspense, the distressing commiseration, and the intense fear which, by turns, afflicted him under this terrible dispensation, might be said to subdue the man within him, and strike at the very germe of life ; and, although Mary, like a ministering angel, not only watched each sick-bed with almost supernatural power of endurance, but continually tried to cheer him by pointing out favourable symptoms, still—still despair sat heavy at his heart. If he prayed, it seemed to him as if his prayer returned to his own bosom ; he felt that he was an alien from God, and given over for punishment, and for the first time he believed the infliction to be just.

As the disorder had been taken at the same time, in a post-house where they had spent the night, so the progress was the same in each, and the poor father believed that all would die within a few hours of each other ; but his indefatigable daughter soon perceived so many desirable circumstances in the child's case, that she had no doubt of saving her, at least, from the wreck. The father was thankful for this ; but it unfortunately induced him to believe that the child escaped because her mental dejection had not increased the ravages of the complaint, and from thence he drew the heart-breaking inference that his sorrows, his situation, were the destruction of his two affectionate children.

The severity of the season and climate added greatly to the danger of the disorder, and both

in Alexander and Ulrica Mary perceived the same symptoms which had been pronounced fatal in the case of the emperor, and, of course, endeavoured, by every means in her power, to communicate the relief he had experienced. At length the superior strength of the male subject prevailed, and Alexander became covered with pustules, when his breathing was relieved, his pulse more tranquil, and Mary requested her father to sit by him through the night, moisten his lips with water, and speak to him cheerfully.

Far different on this eventful night was her own severer task, for poor Ulrica had been long delirious, and was now fast sinking into that state of exhaustion which precedes dissolution ; and it was her especial care to keep the low moanings of pain, and afterward the actual sobs of death, from meeting the ear and alarming the weak spirits of her brother at this critical period. Bitter were the tears that coursed down poor Mary's cheeks as she beheld the altered countenance, and watched the ebbing life of that lovely creature, whose society she had looked to as the solace of her exile ; but, conscious that she must not dare to indulge her natural sorrow, she turned to gaze on little Catherine, and offer thanks to Heaven for the calm sleep into which the sweet sufferer had fallen, and which promised life and health.

Towards morning Alexander also slept, and heard not the departing groans of his beloved Ulrica, respecting whom his inquiries had been incessant, for they were warmly attached to each other ; they had been all their lives together ; and, although his own disposition accorded far more with that of his eldest sister, the gayety and ability of Ulrica had for him continual interest and amusement. Anxious to save him from the shock he must receive until he had more strength to bear it, when Mary had indeed received the last sigh of her sister, and fervently commended her spirit to the God who gave it, she descended, and, awaking Peter, despatched him to the village, which was only half a verst distant, to procure a carpenter, who should bring a coffin with him, and who would perform his sad business humanely and in silence.

"And is the beautiful young empress really dead?" exclaimed Peter.

"My sister is dead : God rest her soul!"

"Poor lady ! poor lady ! just so my Iwanowna died, at the same age, of the same complaint, and they are both alike now, though one was the Czarina, and the other a peasant's daughter."

Peter's words were spoken in soliloquy, as he walked towards the door, and Mary returned to the chamber. She doubted not that Ulrica had been pointed out by the soldiers as the empress, from one company to another, until the mistake reached their poor guide ; and, as she was taken ill the very morning after their arrival, it had not occurred that any of the family had addressed herself by her title, or Ulrica by name, in his hearing. The incident was totally immaterial in the eyes of Mary at this momentous period ; nevertheless, it had an influence on her after-life, and the 'lives of others, of the most painful importance.

Poor Peter sped in his mission, for all the means of the village were strained to procure a coffin fit for royalty ; and it was settled that in the middle of the following night it should be

brought to the cottage; and a young woman who had lately passed through the disorder volunteered to assist the princess in her arduous duties. Long ere then, Menzikoff had wept over the corpse of one daughter, and gratefully blessed the other for those manifold cares which might yet preserve his son from the wreck; for he had seen, with sincere thankfulness to God, the promise of amendment in Alexander.

All things succeeded to their wishes as respected the safety of their patient: the body was removed, the sepulchre reopened, and, by the light of the torches of the country, the lately-blooming Ulrica was laid by her mother, while Menzikoff, as well as he was able, repeated the prayers of the Church, and then returned to his charge, now more valuable than ever.

Before Alexander could leave his bed, Catherine was so far better that the young woman proposed taking her to the village for change of air, and that society with children about her own age so necessary for enjoyment and health; and, as she had rendered herself not less their friend than servant in their late distress, her offer was thankfully accepted. Painful as it was to lose sight of her, Mary saw that it would be for the best; and when the remaining invalid came down, he understood the new friend from the village had removed his sisters for change of air. He rejoiced in this circumstance as a relief to Mary, for whose health he was under the most lively apprehension, as his father had been, for some time; for the last vestige of the rose had faded from her cheek; her form was attenuated and stooping; her appetite unequal to taking their only food; and, although she still spoke with a smile, and endeavoured to answer with a cheerful voice, the effort was evidently painful; and Menzikoff saw, with a pang, such as a father so situated alone could feel, that unless relief of some kind was given to her constitution, *this*, his most precious jewel—she who had found head and heart for all—would perish also.

One morning, as he sat by the delicate Alexander, turning over in his mind the best method of breaking to him the death of Ulrica, and poor Mary, on her part, was silently revolving the sad news that their flour was gone, the whole family were surprised by the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle. Peter flew to the door, and his master quickly followed, and beheld, with astonishment and delight such exiles alone could experience, a number of sheep and goats, two fine cows and a bull, recently driven within the enclosure; while against the wall were reared several fowling-pieces and canisters of powder, together with fishing-nets, which were hung on the door. Peter hastened out to see the persons who had driven them thither, but they had most probably hid themselves in the fir coppice, as no person was visible; and such was the state of the air at that season, it was easy to elude observation.

On approaching the fishing-nets, the prince perceived a letter addressed to him from one who sincerely pitied his misfortune, and desired him to receive these presents as the gift of a friend.*

This was indeed a boon; never had Menzikoff been possessed of wealth so welcome, since

it promised immediate sustenance to his family of the precise nature their weakness required, and which money could not purchase even if they had possessed it. From the circumstance of the barn being found stocked with fodder, it struck Menzikoff that the animals had belonged to the late owner, and been removed, for a time, to some place within a short distance, with intention to present them when he should have suffered all the inconveniences of impoverished exile; or, perhaps, the death of his wife had occasioned pity to touch the heart of some rich Kneser who resided near the confines of Siberia, and knew the especial value of such property to a banished family. This appeared the more likely conjecture, since the time necessary for such an arrangement from the court would not have been possible, unless his degradation had been settled a much longer time than he could believe so young a person as the Czar capable of concealing so terrible a design.

How to place in safety these living treasures, since the winter was now exercising its general severity, became so much an object, that Alexander earnestly desired to lend a helping hand, and Mary could not forbear to go among them. When she had received a brimming pail from the hands of Peter (who certainly rejoiced as much as any one, having augured his own dismissal from the state of the stores), Alexander, while he eagerly drank of the sweet salubrious fluid, exclaimed, "Oh! I hope my sisters will soon come home to share our good fortune. I feel it almost wrong to rejoice so much while poor Ulrica, who has suffered more than any of us, I really think, should not have a share in our happiness."

The father felt that this was the moment in which to inform his dear convalescent of the sad chasm made in their diminished circle; the youth, grieved and surprised as he was, could not forbear a passionate burst of tears; but, as the sudden shock subsided, he saw so clearly the kindness of his father and sister in hitherto sparing his feelings, that for their sakes he determined to act with fortitude, and second their endeavours for his restoration, that he might be useful to those who had done so much for him. He had often been struck and grieved by seeing the tears spring to Mary's eyes, which he supposed to be the consequence of her illness or her lamentation for their banishment; but now he was aware of the true cause, he became more reconciled to their situation, and full of hope that Mary would recover soon, and continue to be their blessing.

The return of little Catherine, much improved in health, and very slightly disfigured, was a source of pleasure to them all, more especially as she not only received food suitable for her full restoration, but enjoyed companionship with the young things around her—more especially the kids which had accompanied their dams, and were playful as herself. In her pleasure, Mary and her brother became sensible that they also were young, and still capable of being gay; and although, in the absence of their father, they often wept over all they had lost, yet, at times, they could also smile together. In early life the heart may suffer severely, for then it feels most acutely; yet the power to rejoice is not therefore extinguished, for its elasticity is wonderful; such is the merciful provision of Nature to secure for us that which is designed to be

* This friend remained unknown, probably from a fear of drawing on himself the anger of the emperor; but it has been thought by many to have been his own gift.

the best portion of our existence, a certainty of some enjoyment despite the ills of fortune.

Young Menzikoff, although considered very handsome, was hitherto delicate and *petite* in person, with the air of a youth who had studied too closely; but from this time he grew tall and robust in health, and soon became adroit in the practice of shooting, to which he was tempted by the great quantity of game found in these desolate regions, and which afforded nutritive and delicious food, of which his father was fond, and which he taught Mary to prepare in the way he had been used to. As their stock of every kind increased, they were able to assist their poor neighbours; and to Mary, as the dispenser of medicines, they all looked for help in case of sickness. Though winter now reigned in all its horrors, yet, as the ground was perfectly hard from the frost, she would frequently wrap herself in the many coverings adopted in the country; and, protecting her face by a visor, go forth to visit and comfort the afflicted, walk with her father to inspect the sheds he was providing for his animals, or bring some young thing into the house, lest it should perish of the cold. She also entered warmly into the plan her father had adopted of building a chapel, which would enshrine the dead, and become also a place where the living might, with due solemnity, offer prayer and praise to the Most High. When speaking of his future exertions to this end, Menzikoff was cheerful, and had somewhat of his old energy lighting up his fine features; but, at all other times, despite of the cares of his affectionate children, his spirit seemed bowed down to the earth, less, as he assured them, by the sorrows he had endured and the losses he lamented, than by the deep penitence and remorse which filled his heart. So changed was his demeanour, so humble and pliable had he become, that Mary was frequently overwhelmed with pity for those crushing woes which had bruised so deeply that proud, ambitious, and once haughty, unyielding spirit. Often, on bended knees and with streaming eyes, would she most fervently beseech Almighty goodness to grant a sense of mercy and pardon to one whose faults had been so sincerely lamented and so severely punished, and who, so far as he was able, showed to all men the sincerity of his repentance.

There were times, indeed, when Mary's compassion led to observation on her father's extreme misery and unceasing self-inflections, which awakened suspicions of the most terrific nature, and which she hastened to banish from her mind by every medium in her power. When she looked at his shrunken form, his hair now streaked with lines white as the snows around them, and observed the deep furrows already ploughed over his noble brow, she feared that some actual crime, some deeper moral stain than the sin of a rebellious heart and intriguing head, sat heavy on his soul, and stung his conscience beyond endurance—could this be the murder of Theodore?

So dreadful was the agony arising from such apprehensions, that Mary felt she could not sustain them and retain her senses. She flew to prayer, to business, to the lowly tomb of her sainted mother, to seek relief for the maddening anguish of such dreadful suggestions, and, by degrees, obtained the power of recalling circumstances connected with that distressing event.

She knew that her father, proud, passionate, and tyrannical, less by nature than by fortune, whose spoiled minion he had been till now, was yet open and honourable in his entinies; incapable of disimulation as of cowardice; and that although, like all courtiers, he tried to disguise his thoughts and command his countenance, yet there never had been a time when his wife and even herself could not read them. The manner in which he had sympathized with her when first she told the sad story; his continued kindness, in which no shade of his present trouble was mingled; and the sorrow for Theodore's sad fate, which she really believed was an alloy to the satisfaction he felt in her marriage, though he held that marriage to be the end for which he had laboured so long, the crowning glory of his successful life. All tended to prove that this could not be numbered among his sins, more especially as he was in attendance on the empress at the period when it took place, or afford cause for that bitter regret, that slow but certain self-immolation, which, by continual fasts and ceremonial crossings and prayers, by solitude and tears, sought to reconcile himself to an offended Deity, or purify himself from the baser dispositions and corruptions of his nature.

In point of fact, Menzikoff might have been taught, by either of his elder children, those truths of Christianity which would have benefited his "soul's health" without destroying his body, and thus adding to his errors. Having never given religion a thought, save as connecting it with the conduct of his wife, or being compelled to listen once in many years to the exhortations of Brukenthal, and in consequence of his ignorance conceiving that the outward ritual was *all*, he bent his mind vigorously to the task of self-punishment and unceasing labour in the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as the only means of acceptance with God, whom he was sensible of having deeply offended, and whose power to sustain his own people he had seen exemplified in the life and death of his wife. That wife, as well as her children, had received instruction from a Lutheran minister, who put into their hands that holy book, the New Testament, from whence was derived the precepts which guided them, the knowledge of that redemption which consoled them; but did not, therefore, divide them from the national Church, which held no doctrine with which they could not coalesce, although it had degenerated so far from the simplicity of an apostolic church as to have little influence on the lives of its members, who rested on the performance of its ceremonial enactments, in lieu of those duties to which they pointed. To the pure all things are pure, and the princess often found comfort in the performance of those rites the national Church ordained; but she looked *beyond* them, her husband looked *to* them.

Often did the anxious brother and sister earnestly desire to place before their father the source of their own hopes for eternity, and seek to show him that despair was a sin, and dependence on his own vain efforts presumption; but their habitual awe and their native modesty prevented the attempt. Even his present humility increased their fear of offending, by appearing to take unwarrantable liberties with one so fallen; and should they, by imprudent interference, again awaken the passions now dormant, would they not produce incalculable mischief instead

of good? Every such consultation rendered them bewildered and unhappy, afraid to proceed, yet reproaching themselves for hesitation, where so much was at stake.

When Menzikoff saw the uneasiness visible in Mary's ingenuous countenance, and that Alexander appeared dejected and abstracted, he became alarmed, yet sensible that his own extreme self-denial, and the weakness consequent upon it, was the probable cause. He saw that such infliction on himself was cruelty to them, therefore he abstained from the rigours of an anchorite, and permitted himself to cheer and encourage his children. He took necessary food, interested himself in the cattle, taught Catherine her letters as well as he was able, and with more success improved Mary's cookery; and so evident was the amendment given to every individual, even the youngest, by the master and father of the little household, that, after witnessing his own power of benefiting them, Menzikoff could never afterward withhold it, however great and even distressing to himself might be the exertion required. Who can benefit his fellow-creatures, especially the children of his love, the companions of his cares, and not be sensible that he is blessed in his labours?

The long, long winter still reigned in all its horrors, and so intense was the cold, that it was only for about an hour in the middle of the day that Alexander could assist the occupations of Peter, or go out with his gun, and their neighbours in the village were prevented, by huge snow-drifts, from offering or receiving assistance. The more delicate of their young animals were housed in the first compartment of the cottage, where the benefit of the stove reached them, and their mothers were brought in by turns, they being also sheltered in the neighbouring barn, where the diminution of proverber awoke the cares of the faithful Peter, and compelled him to lessen the number of the consumers, and place in the cellar provided for that purpose provisions to freeze for future use.

When not actually engaged, this true Siberian had the faculty of sleeping like a dormouse, in any corner of the dwelling, until after supper, when he lay down on the stove. It was the custom of all the family to retire soon and lie long, because their stock of materials for light was much reduced, and they had only four hours of daylight. Nevertheless, when the evening meal was over, they sat round the stove on their low stools, and endeavoured, by conversation on the immediate objects of attention, to deaden the memory of the same social hours spent under far different circumstances, in splendid mansions, where cheerful music, gay company, rich perfumes, and dazzling chandeliers charmed the senses and soothed the spirits.

Mary at this time tried to mend their rough garments, a task ill suited to the hands of the empress; while Alexander would pluck the birds he had shot, or form rude letters with bits of firewood for the use of Catherine, for often would they all lament the want of books as their greatest privation; and each devoted much time to store the memory of the dear child with the prayers of their own infancy, and verses learned in the nursery from the lips of that tender mother who was never distant from memory.

Menzikoff, conscious that he ought to be able to reveal much that had occurred in his own eventful life, of the battles in which he had been

engaged, the courts he had visited, the countries he had traversed, and the celebrated men he had seen, would sometimes arouse himself from the brooding fears and sorrows which oppressed him, and begin to relate anecdotes, or pursue memoirs and memorable actions. With such evident delight did Alexander listen to his details, with so much gratitude to Heaven did Mary's mild eyes sparkle, when she saw him capable of this exertion, and willing for their sakes to pursue what was indeed a labour of love, that it soon became the regular treat of the evening, to which each looked as a solace for the labour and hardships of the gloomy winter day.

Within Menzikoff's time, or immediately preceding it, the world had indeed beheld great changes, but none so singular and important as those projected rather than effected, but most patriotically planned and heroically pursued by Peter the Great. Of course his information related chiefly to that extraordinary man who had taken him from the lowly occupation of crying pastry in the street, discerned his natural talents through the veil of his ignorance, and educated him to become a general in his armies, the inspector of engineers and architects in the foundation of his new metropolis, the legislator of distant provinces and barbarous tribes, and the ambassador to polished nations. While the father of our exiled family dilated on his various employments, the difficulties he had encountered, the power he had exercised, and the grandeur he had exhibited, he yet observed "that he was a much richer man at this time than he had expected to become when he began life, industrious and aspiring as he was by nature, and that he unquestionably enjoyed a degree of freedom he had never known before in the whole course of it." Proof, alas! that although liberty is man's choicest blessing, it is not sufficient for his happiness.

He recalled the person and manners of the Czar to their memories, for, though he only died five years before, yet he had been long ill, and they remembered nothing of him beyond their own fears of him, or their dislike of his rough jokes and convulsive motions; nevertheless, they heard now with deep interest of all he said and did, and his labours in the dock-yards of Holland and England; their hearts delighting in every trait of magnanimity he displayed, sympathizing with every disappointment he had met with, rejoicing in his triumph over Charles of Sweden, yet often marvelling how he could destroy so many subjects for the sake of building a city in a marsh, when he might have founded one at Nishnei Novgorod, in a finer situation than Constantinople.

On the sad differences between Peter and his blameable, but most unfortunate son, Menzikoff could not bear to speak. Though he decidedly condemned the conduct of Alexovitch, and considered his life forfeited to the laws of his country as a subject, he durst not turn his eye upon his own dear son, and feel the strong, the endearing, the indissoluble-tie between them, and justify the parent who condemned his child to a violent though private death. Alas! where hatred exists in the human breast, it is never so inveterate as between relations; and the nearer the tie which should bind us in love, the more terrible, when reversed, becomes the aversion. Peter was the disappointed, unhappy fa-

ther of a son who neither honoured his person nor approved his designs, who was a bad husband and a worthless man, and in his disgust the ties of nature were not only forgotten, but he became a malignant persecutor, and, in giving himself credit for Roman firmness of character, abandoned the mercy a better creed would have inspired.

That wonderful warrior, Charles, was examined from his cradle to his tomb; and after him the wars of the Dutch for the independence they now enjoyed were discussed with due admiration. Thence Menzikoff diverged to Great Britain, an island where the nation had obtained a government, giving extraordinary privileges to the great body of the people, but which only served to render them discontented and unhappy, insomuch that within half a century they had publicly beheaded one king and deposed another, placing a foreigner upon his throne. This information astonished the young Russians exceedingly; they could readily conceive that a conspiracy might be formed and a sovereign murdered, but how a people could arraign a king (let his crimes be what they might) was incomprehensible to the subjects of a despotic government.

"All right must emanate from the great body of the people in the first place," said Menzikoff, "who elect rulers for the advantage of the mass; these rulers, whether they are many or one, march against their enemies, construct for them laws, which laws should be binding on all, and constitute the true power of the state, which ought henceforward to be governed by the written record rather than the body or the individual appointed to enforce it. But as rulers and lawgivers are men, not angels, it will happen, and has happened in countries variously situated, that the abuse of power has originated bad laws, instituted for selfish purposes, and that which was designed to protect and advance the many has become effective only for the few, and the love of power and of progeny has caused those few to gain for themselves and their successors still more, so that, in the course of ages, a certain portion governed the laws, instead of the laws governing them."

"But surely, dear father, it would take many ages to make a fixed code of laws, and there always ought to be a set of men, from time to time, who were empowered to revise and improve them; for it seems quite plain to me, that the same rule could never properly apply to a body of ignorant savages, which ought to guide an intelligent community of well-informed men."

"That is true, Alexander; yet if new laws are made in every age, the immense increase and the complicated nature of such a code would be a perpetual detriment to the ends of justice. The highly civilized people of whom I have just spoken are said to find their own in this condition, and to my own knowledge, France and Austria are in the same position."

"Dear father," cried Mary, "you cannot call the English highly civilized! In murdering their sovereign, surely, they proved themselves barbarous!"

"They were wrong in murdering him *judicially*, for they had no precedent for such a proceeding; they had no law to justify them, for who could foresee such a case? Besides, what man in his senses would accept a throne subject to such a possibility? With regard to the gen-

eral character of this people you are wrong, for they are a generous, humane, and well-instructed nation; but they are proud and stubborn, and, being free, think much of preserving their privileges. Hence, parties arise and disputes run high, which occasionally lead to terrible consequences, as in the case before us, where for years the country was afflicted with civil war, which was concluded by placing the son of the decapitated monarch on his father's throne, under this extraordinary circumstance; that the king they slew was a good man (who might do a little wrong from valuing his position too highly, but whose virtues and abilities were acknowledged by his enemies), and restored monarchy in the person of a son who was altogether worthless, a profligate in the beginning of his time, and a tyrant in the latter part of it."

"I am sorry when free men do wrong, because it renders despots very jealous of their subjects, and the mismanaged liberty of some draw tighter the cords of slavery in others. My tutor had told me much of England as a brave and intelligent nation of great enterprise, possessing numerous colonies, and spreading herself from a small island all over the earth; and he imputed her prosperity to her freedom and her laws; he talked much of her trials by jury, and said a serf could arraign his master and punish him merely for assault; but that no persons, however poor, were slaves as our serfs are. He even said that the people pay a tax which maintains the aged and sick poor, so that no one perishes of hunger and cold throughout their country."

"He told you truly, my dear boy, and he might have added that it was the consequence of their admirable laws—the security of property, the certainty of justice, the ardent love of their country, have made them what they are, while the want of these blessings keeps us what we are. Remember, Alexander, if you should ever again enter the world, that your father for the last twenty years has been silently labouring to aid the true greatness and happiness of his country, by *enfranchising her bondsmen*, and although he did not live to see the time when they could receive liberty, you may."

"If I had ten thousand serfs," said the youth, warmly, "I would emancipate them all to-morrow. But, alas! I have not one, I never may have one, for poor Peter is not ours. I would he were, that I might say 'be free!'"

"At your age, Alexander, enthusiasm is becoming, not less than noble; but, my dear, such changes call for time and prudence; for the effects of education (which impart knowledge slowly to those who labour for bread), by which means the mind is disciplined before the hands are unfettered. The man who has lived from his cradle under the government of another, must be taught how to govern himself, or he will manage the matter badly. Another evening I will tell you what I have thought on this subject, and the plans I have formed for the happiness of my country—a country beloved so fondly, regretted so deeply—a country I shall see no more."

Such were the desultory, but often interesting conversations by which their solitary hours were beguiled. On the mind of Alexander they left an impression of gratitude to his father, in taking pains thus kindly to instruct him, and a full belief that he was the wisest, the best, and

most injured of men, and who could not fail to be soon recalled to the country he had benefited so much. But the father grew less and less hopeful on this subject, and his heart often sunk into bitter anguish, when he lay down on his mean mattress, to think that a son so promising in the sweetness of his disposition and the strength of his intellect should be not only lost to the world he would have adorned, but subjected to feel with advancing time his faculties themselves producing a keener sense of his isolated situation, and the injustice under which he laboured. Would the man submit to that which moved the indignation of youth? Would he, like the imprisoned bird, vainly beat his breast against his prison walls, or by useless flight increase his penalties, or lose his life and his sufferings together?

Mary's cogitations were different to either; she was truly thankful to see her father restored in any degree to his family and to himself, but she had known him much better than Alexander, who was three years younger, and she heard with surprise of his plans for liberating the whole of his countrymen, recollecting, as she could not fail to do, that he was stern and haughty to his domestics, and, until the period of her own illness, indifferent to his children and neglectful to his wife, and that the show and glitter of life were always preferred by him to the society of friendship and the intercourse of affection. That he had not sought aggrandizement for selfish purposes alone was evident; and she herself had wronged him in days past, yet had he also wronged himself by assuming supercilious manners, and grasping at every means of power. Did the excellence of his intentions hallow his actions? or, in this his time of affliction and real humility of heart, soothe his reproaching conscience by persuading himself that he had entertained views so philanthropic, that, however chimerical, they merited the thanks of myriads? Perhaps, in desiring to give freedom on a scale so vast, he had entirely lost sight of that good which he really could do in his own vast estates and extensive establishments. How much better would it have been if he had done what he could, rather than have waited to effect that which he wished?

Mary remembered her joy when he did really effect one important boon to the people, and her own account of that pleasure to Theodore—it appeared to her as if a life had elapsed since then full of changes and sorrow; and, monotonous as her present existence was, since every day brought with it inevitable novelties of sensation, arising from privations, recollections, contrivances, and regrets, she seemed to look back through an incalculable vista of time on the past. She almost wondered how the voice and features of Theodore were so present to her senses—so vividly painted; how her hated marriage could yet dwell on her memory, as if her long, wretched journey, and the deaths of her idolized mother and beloved sister, the danger of her brother, and the misery and prostration of her father, ought to have obliterated early sorrows. But no! the memory of her love and her loss still rose pre-eminent; she knew that she could never again feel as she had once felt, or suffer as she had once suffered; yet she could not repent that she had known what it was to love, and be beloved by him she still held to be the first of created beings: it was like

a gleam from heaven shedding light on the darkness of earth—the one drop of sweetness in a draught of gall.

CHAPTER XXVII.

At length the winter passed away; cold, storms, and darkness, "the dread artillery of heaven," rolled to a still more distant hemisphere with a rapidity exceeding even that they had been used to in the climate of Petersburg, on which they had so often gazed with delight. After a short period, the whole face of the earth became clothed in a robe of the liveliest green—one living, brilliant emerald. Everywhere a sweet asparagus covered the ground, alike delicious and salubrious for themselves and the cattle, which, released from thraldom, revelled in the joys of the season. The streams were unbound, and their finny treasures offered to the hand of man in abundance; and man himself, released from nature's imprisonment, strolled forth to seek "the human face divine," and rejoice in mutual liberation. Parties, resembling the caravans of the East, began to traverse the plains for the purposes of commerce between the noble rivers which intersect this wide extent of country, and upon which merchandise of every description has been borne to various ports, more especially to the great fair of Nishnei Novgorod, the mart where solitary pedlers, with a stock of humble freightage, obtain those goods with which they proceed to the scattered villages and solitary houses of Siberia.

Everywhere this class of visitors is received with welcome and entertained with hospitality, being not less buyers than sellers of property, as their trade is necessarily one of barter, coin being scarce, and the provision made for the banished, and paid in copecks, sufficing only for the barest subsistence. The great business of the inhabitants of these desolate regions is in furs, a certain number of which was in past times exacted as a tax to government, and collected by the officer appointed to receive them in the nearest village; the rest may be disposed of in such a manner as to add to the comfort of the exile who is so fortunate as to procure them, though their cost is more than quadrupled before they are bought for the lining of a prince's pelisse, or the muff of a royal matron.

Following the advice of Peter, his young master had been remarkably successful in procuring many skins of black foxes, which are considered exceedingly valuable; and Menzikoff, at such times as his energies were stimulated, had been little less successful in obtaining animals nearer home; and, whether he might think little of the gain or not, it is certain even now he desired his prowess to be known and his skill appreciated. In consequence, with two or three of these itinerant vendors our family had gladly held intercourse; for they had not only furs, but feathers, and stock of various kinds to dispose of, which they could not feed, and they were grievously in want of summer clothing and vessels required for farming purposes.

Menzikoff was surprised to find himself treated, even in bargaining, with a courtesy and consideration he could not have expected in such a country and from such a race. He was not aware how ill and truly pitiable his appearance had become; and, happily for his children, the great alteration in his person had come on daily and imperceptibly, and appeared to them merely

the result of his sheepskin clothing. Certain of these men, who collected in Petersburgh once in two years the goods they disposed of in this country, had probably seen the handsome, portly Menzikoff in his splendid chariot, or mounted on his prancing warhorse; and the change from that appearance to the gray-haired, emaciated man, eating from a wooden vessel with a horn spoon, while his beautiful daughter sat milking her goats at the door, touched the heart and checked the tongue of those who approached the fallen, yet unchanged exile. He found but little trouble in the exchanges he desired to make; but that which he desired still more, "news of the court," was sparingly given by those who knew that he had once, and but lately, shone there as the brightest star. All he could learn was "that the emperor had with great difficulty lingered through the winter, and was probably dead at that time; and that Ivan Dolgourouki still reigned triumphant, but was the only one of his family resident in Petersburgh at the time of their departure."

The summer was near its meridian; every hour was devoted to secure, from a wide-spread surface, the herbage necessary for fodder; but even labour was exhilarating, and all were enjoying a degree of contentment or resignation they had not hitherto known or even dared to expect. The labours of the preceding day had been somewhat too fatiguing, and they had remained till nearly noon in the house, when Catherine, who was looking through the window, exclaimed,

"Oh! there is another pedler. I see a man, indeed I do; and a boy is coming with him."

Of course the approach of a stranger was important to the child, situated as she was at that period of life when the love of companionship seems a want of nature, more especially to the isolated. In fact, not one of the family could be indifferent to such an arrival, which was at once a surprise and pleasure. "There is a pedler coming," cried the empress to her brother, who was mending a fishing-net at the door, and he re-echoed the words to his father, who was loading a cart with firewood, in preparation for a far different, yet not far distant season.

All proceeded towards the door; but the youngest, who were there the soonest, were alike persuaded that the approaching stranger was not a pedler, for in truth he carried no wares, and, instead of driving a donkey or light cart, he was accompanied by a peasant-boy as a guide, and held only a booshe over his arm, and a light bundle in his hand; besides, he was, though travel-soiled, arrayed like a gentleman, and walked like one; indeed, his step was military, though his appearance was clerical.

Had his dress been that of a soldier, hope would unquestionably have sprung up at the first glance they had of him, for it is a plant of quick growth in the breasts of the young; but they had no idea of royal clemency being extended through any other medium than the army, and therefore did not admit the thought any more than their father, who, not knowing how far the advancing stranger might prove a desirable guest, was about returning to his work, when Mary, in accents of delight, almost wild in its excess, exclaimed,

"It is Mr. Brukenthal! Oh, yes! the dear, good minister comes all this long, *long* way to visit and console us."

"And can there be, indeed, on the wide earth one man found who could do this for his friend? do it, too, for me!" cried Menzikoff, as, his eyes

filling with tears, he yet looked more earnestly towards the stranger, so much affected that he clung to the door for support, as the other approached with slow steps as one overpowered by fear and sorrow.

But Mary had already bounded forward and flung herself on the good man's bosom, while Alexander grasped his hand, and the wondering child gave shouts of welcome. No doubt therefore remained as to the identity of the person of his friend, yet Menzikoff moved not; the excess of his joy, his surprise, his overflowing gratitude, arrested his shaken frame, and, while he felt that a new world was offered to his grief, he had not a hand wherewith to grasp it.

"And how is your father, my children? How does he bear this cruel exile?" said Brukenthal, in tremulous accents, which he could with difficulty articulate.

"Oh! he is so good, so gentle—all pride and passion are subdued within him—he is, I trust, reconciled to everybody and everything," said Mary.

"And now he has got you, he will be quite, quite happy," cried Alexander.

"And so this is your dwelling. What servants have you?"

"Only Peter, and he is far away with our sheep; but we will wait on you—we can do everything for you now."

"Who, then, is the old man at the door? I thought men were scarce in this country."

"Old man!" said the youth, reproachfully; "it is our father."

Brukenthal started back, burst into tears, and turned from the path, that he might conquer his severe emotion before he approached his friend, and clasped to his bosom the companion of his boyish days—that friend had so far recovered from the shock of his joy and astonishment that he ran after him and fondly embraced him; but, for some minutes, both were speechless, for the tide which flowed in either bosom forbade control.

Mary took the young guide into the house, fed him and discharged him—then hastened to prepare the midday meal with more than usual care, employing little Catherine to pick the sweet asparagus, their only vegetable, while Alexander flew to seek the eggs of wildfowl for dessert. Meantime, Menzikoff's first steps were leading his friend to the grave which contained the ashes of that wife he had never ceased to lament, and of that daughter who perished under the first blasts of Siberia.

In the mind of Brukenthal the princess had been long loved and revered as one hallowed on earth and glorified in heaven; and, though her memory awoke a sigh, her removal was held an act of especial mercy. Turning soon to Menzikoff, he said,

"Did you then marry poor Ulrica to Peter instead of Mary, as being a year nearer his own age?"

"Oh, no! the empress would not have heard of it, for she wanted Mary about her person—the poor girl who met you is the empress."

"I live with a small congregation in a sequestered village, and news of the great world reaches us slowly; for even your banishment, which might be said to shock and astonish all Europe, had taken place, and did not reach me for near two months; yet, even in my village, some recalled exiles told the sad tale of your loss on the road, and said, 'The beautiful young empress and your other children were left in great danger.' On, therefore, seeing that sweet flow-

er flourishing in the wilderness, I concluded her sister had been her substitute."

"Oh, no! the empress, as I tell you, would not hear of it, for she fancied my eldest daughter more calculated to assist the feeble mind and narrow information of the prince; and well did my victim daughter fulfil the hard task to which my own ambition, and my desires to benefit my country, doomed her. Yet the empress had the cruelty to tell me, before her death, that I had given a *form*, but not a *heart*, to the successor of her title; and I have reason to think that she prejudiced the young emperor against me, since, although I placed him on the throne, and received new honours at his hands, I saw he no longer loved me, and often treated my daughter with contumely, as if on purpose to insult and tempt my resentment as a father."

"Did he do that?" cried Brukenthal, with a gesture of anger seldom evinced in one so self-subdued.

"Often; but she did not, therefore, relax in her endeavours to please him; in fact, she was all obedience, all gentleness—I may say all her mother; she nursed him through his disease, and, as I believe, saved his life, so far as human means were concerned in it, and the wicked influences of Ivan Dolgourki were for a time suspended; but, when he came again, the infatuated boy gave way, and, despite of all her beauty, merit, and entire devotedness, she became crushed with all her family into one ruin!"

"You have, indeed, proved the worth of his advice, who said, 'put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man,' yet do I greatly fear that the love of them, or rather of their state and splendour, which you shared so long, still draws your heart, and binds it down to earth. The world, dear Menzikoff, may be loved when it is lost, as effectually for the soul's perdition as when we are surrounded by it gauds."

Menzikoff replied not for a considerable time; his eyes were cast on the ground, and he seemed to listen for farther observation or remonstrance with all the humility and teachableness of a child; but at length he answered,

"The heart is so deceitful, that I know not how much of pride and self-dependance may still lurk in my own; but, so far as I can judge, the haughtiness of my mind and the violence of my temper are subdued; and although it has been by sorrow so severe and self-inflections so excessive that I knew not I could endure and live, yet I can sincerely thank God for all, and would not that he spared me one stroke of his rod, save for my children—my poor, afflicted children!"

"Then all is well—my anxious hours, my constant prayers, my long and lonely journeys for six wearisome months, are all, *all* happily repaid; thanks be to our heavenly Father, who hath given thee the victory, my own beloved sufferer!"

"Oh, my friend, I am still dark, still wandering in unknown paths; therefore your presence is not only the dearest gift Heaven could have granted me, but the promise to enlighten my darkness. But let me not be selfish in my joys or in my necessities; come to my cottage; if I have not a palace, I have yet a home much better than I ever merited."

On their adjournment to the dwelling, Brukenthal, who had so long been lodged in the loathsome hovels, where he had found shelter in his miserable journey, saw with surprise the order and neatness with which the young empress had disposed of their coarse and scanty furniture, and the pure pleasure which illumined her beautiful countenance on seating at

their homely board a guest so loved and honoured as himself. Deeply affected by all he saw and all he did not see (for where were the numerous attendants, the gay friends, the thousand elegances and comforts wont to grace their board!), Brukenthal was for some time too much affected to eat; but, by degrees, he controlled his feelings, and, when the meal was concluded, told them all he knew of the world they had left; and, however scanty his information, to them it had an interest the most lively, though mixed with that mournfulness a departed spirit may be disposed to feel towards the dwellers upon earth. To Brukenthal it became in a few hours matter of consolation to find they lived in a world which had also its interest, for the cares of a dairy, in its many concomitants, claimed attention from all at a given hour. The domestic animals fed by their hands, conscious of their presence, and answering with glad cries to their voices, had a power of exciting their affections, and, in some measure, supplying to them a companionship in their solitude; and since to Peter alone was consigned the infliction of death when necessary, which was always performed with secrecy, celerity, and humanity, their enjoyment of these dumb companions was unaccompanied by useless regret.

Brukenthal earnestly desired to learn the particulars of the princess's death, but delayed all inquiry until he should find Mary alone; and they also avoided inquiring the particulars of his journey, terrible as it must have been, since he had walked all the way, and set out in the middle of winter, lest it should bring on references to their own, and the grievous losses which attended it. They sought to avoid those memories which would grieve a guest so dear, and to whom they were so infinitely obliged, preferring his happiness to his sympathy; and fully was their forbearance rewarded when his small package was opened, which contained only a little linen for himself, and what they deemed a most valuable present of books for themselves. Two Bibles, a manual of prayers for families, a hymn-book, and a few volumes of history and poetry, were a prize of invaluable worth in their eyes, and with grateful hearts did they join in the evening devotion he proposed henceforward to establish in their family—it rendered the book of his presence complete.

Mary was the last to seek her pillow, for her gratitude to Heaven was too absorbing on this eventful night to admit the composure necessary for repose. She felt as if the spirit of her mother might now hover round them and partake their adoration, and fondly hoped that she should never again see the mind of her father in so hopeless and dejected a state as that she had so often witnessed, and which it was now become evident had reduced him to early age and fearful decrepitude.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN the ice was once broken, the proud spirit humbled to confession, as we have seen in his meeting with Brukenthal, it will be naturally supposed that from day to day Menzikoff spoke of his fears, his feelings, his imperfect faith, and his glimmering hopes, with the anxious humility and the obedient pliability of a young disciple; and anxiously did he inquire,

at the earliest opportunity, "if his many fasts—his prayers, breathed from the hard, cold ground—his repetitions of texts and recitations of hymns, for hours together, would propitiate the God under whose punishment he was suffering, and atone for the sins he had committed against many of his fellow-creatures, though his natural disposition was merciful and generous."

"The more you forced that disposition from its natural inclination, the greater was your sin; but as to your fasts and prayers, though they were good as far as they proved sincerity and increased the sense of contrition, it is my duty to tell you they were useless as a mode of reconciling you to the God you had offended, or the fellow-creatures you had injured. Nevertheless, cherish your humility and repentance, for they are your guides to the only true source of acceptance. We will read the New Testament together, my dear Menzikoff, and look at the great gift of man's salvation, not through the vain veil of man's inventions (which often obscures that which in his weakness he seeks to embellish), but read it in the written word, which is solace to the humble mourner, light to the ignorant mind, and shows us the only source of acceptance with God on which a sound understanding dare rely. He 'who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,' having bought us by the precious sacrifice of himself, requires not the intercession of the saints, or the repetition of formulas. 'Give me thy heart, my son,' is the language of scripture, and 'an humble and contrite heart he will not refuse.' Remember, despair is sin."

"Then that sin I have also indulged, though, for the children's sake, I have at times subdued or dissembled it. Alas! I have feared to hope; I have laid weight on weight to crush down the aspiring spirit of ambition within me, and render myself more worthy Divine mercy, and now you say I have done nothing. Alas! my own heart re-echoes the truth; how, then, can I fail to despair!"

By slow degrees and many repetitions, Brukenthal combated the fears, the objections, the false conceptions, and anxieties of his disciple, who listened with the pliability of a submissive child, and the deep solicitude of a conscious sinner, who felt that his eternal happiness or misery depended on a transitory existence far advanced towards the grave. Often would he comment on his own former ignorance, and obstinacy—blame the deaf ear he had turned to remonstrance, and the cold insolence with which he had repelled entreaty or instruction. The friend, who at that time had given plain reproofs, and met disdain with calm magnanimity or fearless rebuke, now led the meek penitent with tenderness "to the fountain of living water," having all the gentleness of pity, and the patience which was unwearied in obviating every difficulty, removing every impediment, and proving at once his zeal in the cause of his Divine Master, and his intense desire of speaking in all sincerity the language of comfort to one who now said from his immost heart, "Save, Lord, or I perish!"

When the blessed book had fulfilled its mission of mercy, and opened on the mind of the exile the promise of eternal life, as given in the Gospel, Brukenthal became more sensible than he had ever been of the premature decay and infirmity into which his friend had fallen. His

fine features no longer bore the character of sorrow; on the contrary, his pale countenance was calm as his bearing was gentle, and he returned from seasons of retirement with an expression of gratitude to God and good-will to man edifying to all who beheld it; but the struggle of the spirit had been so terrible, that his strong frame had sunk beneath the punishment; his form was comparatively shadowy, his muscles shrunk, and, though only forty-seven, the character of more than threescore and ten was written in lines on his brow and mouth, that told the story of his sufferings. His friend grieved for him, and dreaded the future fate of children so tenderly attached, so grievously situated, and so likely to be forgotten by a court to whom they had been hitherto incapable of doing service. He now as anxiously sought to restore health to his body, and, by inducing exercise, to renovate his appetite, which was very weak, and of rendering him at once thankful and cheerful. He told him that "God loved a cheerful worshipper, that the beauties of creation, the gifts of Providence, were given to be enjoyed, and that the austerity affected by some good men was frequently allied to the moroseness of temper it was their duty to conquer, rather than the seriousness they held it a duty to adopt." Wherever they went he took the little playful Catherine with them, encouraged her to gambol with the lambs, to hunt for Mary's favourite flowers, and, by all the endearments suggested by her age and her affections, to enliven dear papa.

His efforts were for a time effective; Menzikoff listened to the sweet voices of his children as they sung their evening hymn or the songs of their childhood, and entered by degrees on topics of general conversation with his friend; but the most effectual mode of restoring his energies were the forwarding his scheme of building a little homely chapel, as was formerly mentioned. The season was propitious, and Alexander set out gladly to call on the assistance of their neighbours, who responded to it with all the good-will of kind-heartedness, and the pleasure which belongs to a novel and interesting object.

Wood and stone were plentiful, youth and strength were found sufficient, nor could skill be wanted in one who had raised a city under his own eyes, and was vigilant in observation not less than command. The labours of Mary and Peter were called for to provide food for their voluntary helpers, and the long days facilitated their progress. Everything around gave a sense of life so exhilarating, they could have fancied themselves again in Petersburgh, where carpenters, stonemasons, bricklayers, and all other parties concerned in architectural erections, rendered the air redolent of busy sound, which had been many times annoying even in the palace, but was now welcome both for its object and its novelty.

Alexander's share of the toil was that of providing fish for the party, in catching which he was exceedingly adroit, and the river Gessi, about two versts distant, was not less fruitful in this respect than the Obi, into which it flowed near Berenzof. The Greek religion obliges its churches to observe numerous fasts, therefore the wealth of the Siberian rivers is eagerly resorted to in summer, both for present consumption, and in order to stock ice-cellars for

the winter, but never does the great reservoir of nature fail her children; and, since help in all difficult cases could generally be found, our young angler went forth with eager steps, dragging a rough kind of light car, constructed by Peter, for the purpose of bringing home his prize, whether great or small. Rarely did his keen eye, practised hand, and excellent tools fail to procure the royal sturgeon, the useful cod, and varieties of smaller but yet delicious fish, and every evening he was now obliged to procure a companion in dragging home his vehicle, when he assisted the empress in cooking a supper which might have tempted an epicure, and afterward in distributing to their kind neighbours what was a welcome treat to their families.

Unremitting labour was necessary to effect their purpose where the summer was so short, that every day and almost every hour was numbered as a gem too precious to be misspent, a cordial which was given to the possessor, drop by drop, to provide sustenance for its long and fearful follower, of which Mary had seen so much that she was now indefatigable in her preparations for winter; but her interest in the present object was paramount to all others; and her kindness, thoughtfulness, and activity in her own share of the task, contributed, doubtless, to the celerity with which the building was completed. "Inside finishing," Menzikoff said, "could be done in another summer, and certain ornamental portions be prepared during the winter;" but his first great object was getting his chapel consecrated by his friend, and opened for Sabbath worship by the preaching of Brukenthal, for he well knew the wants of an unlearned and simple-minded people, who already loved him.

Little do the inhabitants of cities, blessed with the abundant means of spiritual improvement, know how incalculably dear, how venerably important, is the gift of a church and a minister; the explanation and the promises of the scriptures, to a handful of simple souls in the wilderness, whose hearts are awake to their duties, but who, in their untaught ignorance, neither know the extent nor the nature of that which they sincerely desire to perform. To them, "beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings;" and those among whom our banished family were placed hastened, from every side of that thinly-populated district, with an avidity and gratitude for the boon of this house of prayer and praise alike gratifying to Menzikoff and Brukenthal, who might justly rejoice in the sense of being their benefactors, and lift up their own thanks, giving praise for the mercies they were, in poverty and exile, permitted to bestow.

The sweet, full voice of Mary; the deep, mild base of Alexander, led the hymn, which, rising from that lowly edifice, spread over the wide expanse, unbroken by one discordant interruption; and the calm air, the deep blue sky, the gliding stream, and the green earth alike reposed in the tranquil Sabbath which man sought to establish, and laboured to improve and enjoy.

cal importance named Veronkesi. He was the greatest landowner in the country within an immense space, and a man whose generosity of disposition was commensurate with that wealth which the poor around him held to be incalculable. On the female side, he was a descendant of the celebrated German Timiosevitz, a Don Cosak whose conquests had extended over much of Siberia; and his fathers had been long held as governors or chieftains in their native land. Considering himself entitled to power from his birth, as derived from a long line of ancestors, he was yet fully aware that he could not resist any decree of Russia's, and therefore thought it true policy to hold himself aloof from all communication with her. He neither courted the honours to which his situation gave him a claim, nor ventured to thwart her views, even in cases which somewhat trench'd on the freedom he loved. The situation of his mansion, and even his land, was favourable for his plans of peace and security; for one of the few risings of land met with in Siberia nearly surrounded his grounds by a kind of rocky ridge, and a great portion of the rest was completely hidden by a plantation of tall firs, which afforded shelter for various beautiful trees not often met with in the country, and which at once completed the secluding belt, ornamented the home-scenery, and greatly aided the agricultural promise of his fields.

From that class of persons who were condemned by the crown to exile Veronkesi had particularly shrunk, whatever might be their rank, or how much soever he might individually pity them, since he feared not only to be marked by a suspicious government prompt to revenge even fancied insult, but feared that his kindness might compromise their safety, and a removal to the mines be the consequence of his imprudence. Under this impression, he had so far taken no notice of any of our family; and the residence of such a person so near them would have been unknown, if Alexander, in his many rambles with the gun, had not stumbled on the young Boyar when similarly employed, and whose heart, naturally warm and unchilled by any worldly maxims, readily expanded to the attractive and intellectual stranger. The young man was brought up, however, with the deep respect all Asiatics pay to their fathers, and presumed not to push an acquaintance he knew to be inimical to his wishes, though he frankly related the meeting, and warmly extolled the personal qualities of the stranger.

The Boyar loved his people as only the ruler of a small community can love them. He knew their wants, their capabilities, their ignorance, and, in many cases, their desire of instruction; therefore the report of Menzikoff's little chapel, and of the holiness and eloquence of Brukenthal, rendered him so eager to secure his services for his people, that his scruples were subdued at once, and he became not less eager than his son to repair to the new place of worship, and see the extraordinary people of whom he heard so much. His wishes were the more likely to be indulged despite his prudence, because he found that all guardianship over the person of Menzikoff had been, for some time, withdrawn; that he had been long since endowed with flocks and herds, in accordance with the will of the emperor; and that, whatever might have been the ambition and assumption of his past days, he was now endued, in their conception, with the sanctity of a saint.

The Boyar, his son, and several of their de-

CHAPTER XXIX.

WITHIN eight or ten versts of the present abode of our exiles dwelt a Boyar of much lo-

pendants were all in good time for public worship on the following Sunday, though, as yet, no bell (that dear object with all Russians) had been procured in order to send even a faint tinkling forth to call its widely-scattered congregation. Highly gratified and moved by all he saw, on the following Sabbath he attended with a more numerous train, whom he left behind as he made his way to the cottage, and, with equal frankness and dignity, declared his name, and professed his desire for the friendship of the pastor and the prince. After courteously accepting the cates of the country from the hands of the empress, he gave the whole family a pressing invitation to his house the following Friday, when his son would attain his majority, and there would be a meeting of all the country in the front of his dwelling.

Menzikoff looked distressed and irresolute: the invitation interfered most painfully to him with those thoughts and services to which the day was devoted, and jarred upon his feelings; but Brukenthal, who saw in a moment the pure good meaning of the Boyar, and how desirable it was that the young people should seize the only chance the whole year would, by possibility, present to them, readily observed that the prince was too much of an invalid to accept promptly an invitation with which he might not be able to comply; but, should that prove the case, he would himself have great pleasure in accompanying the young people.

The clergy, except those at the head of the hierarchy, are not generally held in as much respect in Russia as, from their office, they ought to be, but in this distant region a far happier impression obtained, and towards Brukenthal every heart was warm, and, of course, his offer was gladly accepted, and his presence counted an honour.

The invitation was not reverted to on that day, which was given alone to "remembering the Sabbath day, and keeping it holy;" but, when broached on the following morning, it is certain Alexander, Mary, and the child could talk of little besides; and with so much considerate kindness did the good minister enter into their wants and their wishes, that he proposed setting out to Berenzof the following morning to purchase suitable habiliments for them all, intending, out of his own almost exhausted purse, to purchase a dress for Mary, as the proof of his especial love; for he well knew that their stock of money and goods was by no means low. Alexander had obtained a quantity of those valuable furs which always command purchasers, and it had been Mary's especial pleasure to procure, by the sale of lambs, good summer-clothing for her father and the child, with coarse necessaries for herself.

It was not thought advisable that Alexander, as a banished criminal, should show himself in a town, therefore the reverend friend set forth alone on a mission for which he must be thought ill calculated, and which, it is certain, nothing less than a pure and beautiful principle of philanthropy would have induced him to engage in. Brukenthal had never taken the liberty of marriage, which his church allowed him; he had given himself, heart and soul, to his people, as not less his flock than his family; nor did he leave them at the call of ancient friendship and heart-rending pity till he had procured them a temporary substitute like-minded with himself; and it might be truly said,

They were the bride of his affections, the objects of his fidelity; of course, the sweetest and the strongest tie of nature had never gladdened his heart or charmed his eye. The "little strong embrace" had never twined his neck or hung to his lip; but, in resigning the pleasures of paternity, he did not divest himself of its privileges. In all its best, purest, most endearing characteristics, he was the loving father, the constant friend, the watchful guardian of those young creatures who must soon know no other, and who never, in days past, had known so good a one. His sorrow for their present solitude, his fears for their future difficulties, mingled with his prayers for their welfare, and the resignation he sought to obtain on their behalf; yet much of pleasure combined with his present sensations, and he stepped onward cheerily, for the sky was bright though the path was rugged; and steril as the country was, it now bore the promise of that small harvest which might be gathered from beneath the snows of winter.

A Russian can throw his wearied limbs in any place of shelter and sleep; therefore Mary was easy as to the accommodation of their friend, but all were sensible of the chasm made in their society even for a single night. How could they expect, or even desire him to stay with them? yet what would their father do without him through the long, dreary season, which might come sooner than they expected, much as they had been warned by the natives?

When he reappeared, the question all feared to ask was answered, for he was loaded with sheep-skin clothing bought for his own future use; and, though grieved to see him heated and fatigued with the warm load he had brought on his shoulders, no part of his purchases were so welcome to the young ones as those habiliments which seemed to warrant his stay; and the eyes of Menzikoff were filled with sweet and grateful tears as he surveyed them.

When Mary examined the kind gift of her friend, she found it all which her own taste would have selected, and, from the exceeding novelty of the possession, had undoubtedly more pleasure in it than she had ever felt when decked in the trappings of royalty, ornamented with waving feathers and diamonds innumerable. Menzikoff smiled as he saw her intent on fashioning her finery, but a sigh followed; for he feared lest, after having found the insufficiency of grandeur for happiness while in the world, she should now learn to desire it when unattainable.

Brukenthal read his thoughts. "Have no fear," said he, gayly, "for our stitching empress, but rather rejoice in that one beam falls on her gloomy path, for it is not likely to mislead her. Every creature that lives has its spring-time of existence, and why should not man join in the general charms of nature while his heart is in tune for it? he adds the pleasures of intellect to those of sense, and is blessed with reason to control its excess; he feels his immortality in his enjoyment."

"And why, my friend," he added, "should not we rejoice in the fleeting amusement given to these dear children? If our hearts have lost their spring, they have not lost their sympathy."

"Alas!" said Menzikoff, "I am myself a child, walking in a new, and therefore difficult path. I dread, in any manner, re-entering a world which may offer temptation I cannot foresee, and may not be able to withstand. I can trust others, but not myself; for I know the turpitude of my own nature. Every day of my past

Life offers a volume of warning; nevertheless, I will go with my children, for they would grieve to leave me. I will enjoy the balmy breath of our short summer, see more of the country which is now become my own, and the harmless mirth of its simple people. I may be weary as well as timid, but I will not be selfish."

They set out at an early hour, Alexander undertaking to be their guide, and stepping before them with the buoyant air of youth in his limbs, and the flush of expectant pleasure glowing in his handsome countenance. Mary, her thickly curling tresses bound in by a fringed handkerchief after the fashion of the Tatars, a manteau of pale green and a kaftan of white, had never looked more perfectly lovely, as she led by her hand the blooming Catherine, who was all happiness, and sprung over the short grass fair as a fabled fairy. Several versts were passed before they reached the bounding ridge of the Boyar's patriarchal domains, when the surprise and pleasure they experienced drew the steps of all the party together, to comment and admire the singular situation of the mansion, its many beauties and vast extent, for a large adjoining village lay so close under the walls, that from the present elevation they seemed to be all one edifice.

Curiosity being awakened rather than gratified, their steps were quickened and their pleasures increased by finding how well the valley was cultivated, and that the clear spring they were accustomed to call their own meandered thither. On arriving within the immediate precincts of the dwelling, the Boyar and his son, both splendidly dressed in the ancient costume of their race, met and warmly welcomed them. Leading them into the mansions, these welcomes were repeated, and the ladies of the family presented.

The large rambling castle on which they had been long gazing was to them unique, for in their long wretched journey, if they had passed any such, assuredly they had not seen them. It was only one story high, was built of wood, but flanked by two towers of stone, which gave it somewhat the air of a fortress. As these towers were considerably apart, and the intervening space filled up, in the first instance, by necessary rooms and galleries of state, those Boyars whose large families or numerous serfs required new accommodations, had obtained them by making abutments on either side the house, by which all regularity of form was completely forfeited, and a heterogeneous cluster of misshapen low buildings (which were not yet unpicturesque) presented to the wondering eye.

Few guests had yet arrived, and after our party had partaken of a slight refreshment, the Boyar desired them to accompany him to the southern tower in order to watch their arrival. For this purpose they passed through many rooms, in which they saw furniture, which had doubtless been collecting for centuries, massive and rich with gilded ornaments; in others were seen little besides the divan of the Turks and the movables of the kiosk. Silken hangings formed the frequent division of the apartments, and in everything was apparent a mixture of the Asiatic and European costume, the former predominating.

Alexander, at the precise age when curiosity is most keenly alive, was delighted to gaze on a new scene, and meet with new people, who could point to him the routes to Tobolsk or Astrachan, the course of the distant Voiga or the nearer Oby; while Mary gazed delightedly on the cultivated flowers which enriched the

garden, and in some measure supplied the absence of a genial season to this ungenial clime.

The first care of the Boyar seemed to be that of assembling the family into a little knot, and explaining to them the wants of his people in a religious point of view, the avidity with which they sought instruction, their fears of losing the good minister so lately come among them, and his own desire to retain him by any act of settlement within his power. When told that Brukenthal was of the Lutheran Church, he answered that he had discovered it from the simplicity and devotion of his prayers, and the good sense and scriptural plainness of his sermons.

"Having been obliged to read and think for myself in this wild country," he added, "I have long since seen the vanity of many of our customs, and shall be thankful to build on a better foundation. Of course my people are more ignorant than myself, and I want, by any possible means, to secure the continuance of your friend among us. Surely at his time of life he had better abide where he will be so beloved and so useful, and can live with a friend to whom he is so attached?"

"He has long been the pastor of a people who reverence and love him, and to whom he must return. How do I know that the climate will not shorten his days, as I doubt not it will mine? No, my lord, though I hold his kindness to be unparalleled, indeed beyond what man ever showed to man, and his society to me is dear as that as a mission from Heaven, I feel that so far from keeping him here, it is my duty to urge his departure. He is far too precious to be sacrificed for me."

As Menzikoff spoke, his eyes, though filling with tears, were lighted up with that brilliant flame which certainly indicates a fire within that is lighting its victim by slow but certain steps to the grave. Brukenthal, who was approaching the speakers, had never observed this proof of incurable disease so decidedly developed before, and he felt that he could never leave him. A new and sacred bond was between them that could not be severed, but the world was now around them, and demanded that attention all who live in it must occasionally yield to its claims.

They turned to gaze on the scene below, and beheld on every side troops of guests hastening to a meeting of festive diversion, rarely enjoyed in this country, but which the warmth of summer permitted to far distant visitants, who slept under light tents or on the open plains, and travelled many leagues for its enjoyment. Whole troops of strangers on horseback, in light vehicles of various forms, or on foot, but frequently making a gay and imposing appearance, advanced towards this palace of the desert with music and shouts of gratulation.

Many appeared as friends and connexions of the family whom they desired to honour; many as tributaries, who performed an act of recognised duty to their chieftain. The young and bold sought to exhibit themselves, their horses, and the rich trappings of both; the elder to renew the memories of past pleasures, and cement the friendships which had benefited themselves and families; the rich, to accept distinction; the poor, to partake hospitality. Everywhere they were pressing forward; and the Boyar and his son, leaving the prince and his party with certain relations of his house, now hastened to receive the numerous company, and assign to each party the quarters appropriated to them as shown in the various tables spread out, line by line, on

the wide lawn in front of the mansion. The master of the feast and the officers of his household held this to be a pressing object of solicitude, as it would not do for parties from nations or tribes inimical to each other to be placed in close vicinity.

On descending from the town, the Boyarini and her attendant damsels had conducted the daughter of Prince Menzikoff into the room of state, and given her the place of honour, notwithstanding the simplicity of Mary's attire, which was only enriched by that solitary gem which was the relic of her mother, and now shone on her fair forehead; whereas, several ladies of the land, who had been brought in litter by their attendants, were already seated, attired in all the Oriental magnificence of Persia and Tatary. Nor were there wanting, in this far-fetched assemblage, the higher gifts of beauty and grace. Several Georgian women were present of extraordinary loveliness, with such finished delicacy of features, such fine texture and tincture of skin, as to realize all the descriptions the young empress had at times received from her courtiers at Petersburgh. To the charms of person, these fair ones added open, ingenuous, pleasing manners, at once modest and free; whereas, many others showed ignorance veiling itself in haughtiness, or that awkward simplicity and extreme timidity natural to the servile; and several remained closely wrapped in their yashmacs, afraid to look upon the very entertainment they had travelled hundreds of versts to partake.

The sports now commenced, and a truly gallant display was exhibited by various tribes of youths from the Caucasus, the Circassians, the Tatars, and Cossacks, in many instances mounted on horses of immense value, the housings of which sparkled with gold and jewels, while their riders, dressed in rich silk, fringed with costly fur, and their caps ornamented with feathers, or the bushy tail of white and blue foxes, gayly curveted in mimic battle, or pursued Asiatic exercises of the most animating description. Throwing the jerrid or assaqua; practising with the bow or the pistol at a mark; engaging in pursuit or attack; carrying the hero of the day on a throne composed of their arms, after making him appear the victor in their sports, concluded this portion of the entertainment.

The most wealthy and accomplished of this class were the youth of Krim Tatary,* then a widely spreading and beautiful country, combining, with the pastoral character peculiar to many of its numerous tribes, freedom of institutions derived from ancient Greece, and a valour that belonged to her happiest days. They had repeatedly suffered from the inroads of their ambitious neighbours, but Catherine and Potemkin were demons to their land not yet in existence, and no soothsayer had arisen to damp their generous ardour by predicting their present state of utter prostration. As Menzikoff gazed on them, he rejoiced that he had not fulfilled much of that which he had designed against them in the days of Peter.

The son of the Boyar, Alexovitch, in whose honour these rejoicings were made, was well calculated to figure in this noble assemblage. He was singularly handsome in feature, and the expression of his countenance combined the intelligence of his mother, who was of Georgian descent, with the frank and prepossessing linea-

ments of his father, who was a Kirkuisan. The latter had taken great pains to render him perfect in the *ménage*, and give him every other instruction befitting a warrior, should he be called upon to join the Russian service, to which his allegiance bound him, when demanded. Having himself once served for a short time under Peter the Great, he had ever since affected the manners of the inhabitants of cities, and he now proposed that the whole of his party should dine at the same time, subject, of course, to the divisions alluded to; but many females shrank from the proposition with so much horror, and their lords manifested such offence, that it was speedily settled to provide within doors for all the wives and daughters of the Mohammedans, care having been already taken to keep their husbands and fathers at due distance from unbelievers without.

The Christian population, both male and female (though at separate places), now hastened to the tables, where a most abundant meal was spread out by hundreds for the refreshment of about two thousand visitants, all congregated for the purposes of enjoyment, and delighted by the novelty of their situation, the hospitality of their host, and the claim for personal consideration each had, or deemed he had, in his own circle. The influence of the sun in such a country was alone a source of delight; and although few awnings were provided, and the heat was very great, many seemed to rejoice in his beams, as if they sought to absorb a stock for the coming days of his absence.

Young Menzikoff, at a period of life when society is especially dear, and with whom from very infancy the pursuit of knowledge amounted to a passion, was enraptured by the position in which he found himself, being especially gratified by the great variety of people from distant countries and various governments, who seemed gathered into one narrow circle as if for his inspection. He beheld around him the raw-boned, courageous Kalmucks, darting their small black eyes from beneath their Chinese formed sculls with a look of cunning good-nature; Tangusians, of whose sight and hearing he had heard most miraculous accounts, and whose handsome, manly forms seemed to give warrant of their abilities; gay little Vagouls, whose merriment offered an excuse for their ignorance, and showed (as more civilized parties have often done) that a gay fool may help a wise man to enjoy a gay hour. Then followed Kinguisians; generous, high-spirited fellows, whose horses he had envied (for where is the youth who does not love a horse, if he was born to the possession of one, and accustomed to its use?); and last, not least, were Tatars, Circassians, and Georgians, who, in their natural graces and manifold personal acquirements, seemed born to be rulers of every land; for where circumstances do not admit the display of intellectual attainment, those qualities which strike the eye, and are evident to all, must compel our admiration.

When the hunger of this large party was appeased, and the noble host had ascertained that the gipsy and the beggar, the houseless exile and the decrepit wanderer, had been abundantly provided, and an immense quantity of fish and flesh, wildfowl and pastry, the cranberry, which was the only native fruit, and the sugar brought from far, had disappeared, and liquors of every description had succeeded, something resembling conversation took place in the immediate vicinity of the Boyar. It appeared that every description of persons now assembled retained

* See an historical novel called "the Prophet of the Caucasus."

that respect for the elders of their tribe, family, or party, which is the distinguishing badge of Eastern nations, and the mark of simple, but not savage life. Jests and loud laughter had prevailed during the meal among the warrior, hunter, and nomade tribes; but it was now expected that the great and the grave, the Nestors of the land, would converse, and the young desired to listen to them.

Many among the company had been surprised to see the Boyar place at his right hand a man so coarsely though decently apparelled, and those who, from the nobleness of his form, and that indescribable something which, in his carriage, marked him as one accustomed to the manners of a court, thence concluded him an exile, were still more surprised, as such distinction appeared a defiance of those powers which, though far distant, had still an eye to recognise and a hand to punish.

But by degrees the name of Menzikoff was whispered round, and a name which had once been heard in every corner even of that vast appanage to the Russian empire, and resounded through every neighbouring country which had sought its protection or feared its aggression, had not lost its power to command attention. It thrilled the young with an electric vibration of horror, for how could they bear to believe that pale, gray-headed man, evidently broken down with sorrow, had been not only the generalissimo of Peter the Great, but him who had lived in the hearts of his soldiers, and through their means held the crown of all the Russias in his gift—nay, the man whose daughter was at this hour their empress in the belief of many, though a few recollect ed with emotions of compassion that his wife had perished on her terrible journey, and his daughter on its termination?

Several persons were present who had assisted in the wars of Peter the Great, who had often witnessed the exploits of him who first appeared as the brave and venturous young soldier, whose gallant appearance charmed all eyes, and afterward, as the experienced general, on whose knowledge, not less than courage, every one relied with confidence; and such memories once awakened and inspirited by the juice of the grape in its most potent form, he became the all-exciting subject of conversation, and the speakers soon led from clamorous praise of the engrossing subject to indignant reprobation of his enemies. One who was now the chieftain of an important tribe had been present, when, by a masterly manœuvre, Menzikoff defeated General Creah at Pultava, thereby turning the fortune of the day, and obtaining Russia deliverance from the most persevering and courageous enemy she had ever known, and two others immediately declared themselves to have been among the defeated, and gave the testimony of generous opponents to his ability and bravery. They described him when pursuing their harassed, enfeebled, and flying troops (half conquered ere the battle began by cold, hunger, and damp) to the banks of the Dnieper, and by compelling them to surrender, securing the safety of a devoted band, whose courage he honoured, and to whose dead the emperor himself had decreed a monument that would last forever.

As these tales of past deeds went round, many pressed about him who was their object, and, by every mode in which they could manifest indignation towards those who had degraded him and respectful homage to himself, sought to draw his attention, and make him sensible that they were devoted to his service, generally finishing their

eulogy upon himself by a recapitulation of their own warlike deeds, and the number of lances that owed allegiance to them. The eye of Brukenthal, with anxious, and, it may be said, holy jealousy, was on him, though from a considerable distance; for he trembled lest these demonstrations of a regard and admiration which were, doubtless, the sincerest he had ever met with (various as were the scenes in which he had figured as "the observed of all observers"), should awaken the pride of his nature, or lead him to advert in anger to the sad situation he filled in this hour of excitement, when it was evident the enthusiasm awakened towards himself and his fair family might easily have been stirred into rebellion.

Happily, there existed no reason for this fear. Menzikoff, while he received the courtesy of all around him with a thankful smile, and expressed his delight in companionship with the brave people who were willing to accept the friendship of a man under the ban of exile, evidently entertained no revengeful or aspiring thoughts; "nature had done with her resentments" in him; he had accepted his chastisement as from the hands of God, and into those hands he committed the issue; terrible as his emotions of vengeance, rage, and bitter regret might have been (and doubtless were), it was evident the struggle was over; for himself, it was enough that life should be devoted to warring against the inborn enemy of his soul's welfare, and in preparing to meet his Maker and Redeemer.

While they were thus situated in full and joyous converse, the Boyar was withdrawn from the table, as it appeared from the arrival of a messenger, and as he was observed to look grave on his return, those near him inquired "if there was any irruption from an enemy." After his assuring them to the contrary, he expressed a wish that the young persons would begin to dance. At the word the tables were deserted by much the greater part of the company, who betook themselves to a long temporary gallery open on one side, and ornamented with flowers and branches of trees, and where two bands of music were stationed: the whole could be seen to advantage from the table of the Boyar, and most of the others.

Mary Menzikoff opened the ball with young Alexovitch in one of the national dances, and, if her father had won admiration among those with whom courage is a virtue above all others, so did she among the young, who are charmed by beauty or won by eloquence. For a short time, her spirits elated by the gayety and novelty of all around her, her heart gratified by the attention paid to her beloved father, she did justice to her own person and accomplishments, but there was a something in the peculiarity of her situation that reminded her of that eventful evening when she danced with Theodore, and all the sad train of sorrows and disappointments which had followed since then rushed in succession to her mind, and charged her with happiness as if it were a crime (rarely as it was committed). She became suddenly pale, her steps were less animated, her looks indicated abstraction of mind, and, when seated, she declined engaging in farther exertion for the evening.

The Boyar and Prince Menzikoff had been gazing on their children with those sensations which reward a parent's many anxieties, and each read the other's feelings by their own, as they approached in silence to the young couple.

The feast was intended to continue for three days, but the considerate host concluded that the banished family would deem it prudent to sleep only under their own roof, as their obedience might compromise the welfare of the kind keeper who permitted their visit, and he therefore informed them "that horses for the gentlemen and a litter for the ladies were now awaiting their commands." It was with great difficulty that the good father prevailed on his son to forego the pleasure of attending on his late partner to her humble home, but the laws of hospitality at length induced him to return to the many bright eyes which desired his presence.

Menzikoff, mounted on a beautiful charger, accompanied by a friend who had rode by his side to many a gallant field, saw his son proudly curveting near him, and forgetting, like most youths of his age, the past in the present, felt for the moment that swelling of the heart which says, "am I not, even yet, a man among men ? one whose actions have ensured fame, and whose name shall descend with glory !" Alas ! he soon felt how different was his arm from that which was wont to curb the most impetuous steed, how fragile was the tenement of that spirit once so enterprising ; and, casting his eyes round on the midnight twilight, he sought for a similar gentle radiance from within, which should illumine his passage to that tomb to which every sensation told him he was hastening.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN the family reassembled the following morning, every one naturally descended on the hospitality, the wealth, and the power of the Boyar, save Mary, whose great object was to learn how far the excursion had been capable of amusing her father, or whether it had been in any degree injurious to him.

"I could not fail to be pleased with the extraordinary interest so many brave, kind-hearted men took in me," said Menzikoff ; "and as to the Boyar himself, I hold him in the warmest bonds of friendship ; nor do I find that my health has suffered ; I have no weariness beyond what is natural. If you thought I looked more serious than usual, you, my dear Mary, were the cause of it, and not any personal source of trouble."

Mary replied only by a deep blush, and a look of confusion and distress.

"You are, my dear child, become a widow : a messenger brought to the Boyar this information from Tobolsk, therefore the news has been long in reaching this part of the country. The emperor has been dead ever since the beginning of January. Our host will not reveal this information 'till the departure of his guests, not liking to mar his entertainment by imparting anything which would cast a gloom over the meeting ; and at such a distance from the court, and even the country, such a ceremony seemed to me uncalled for. Beyond ourselves, no one knew the late emperor either in person or action ; we, unhappily, knew him too well."

Mary sat down in silence ; her hands were folded, and tears welled up into her dovelike eyes ; but, as her very nature was all truth and simplicity, she thought not a moment of affecting sorrow. Equally free was she from permitting the risings of anger towards one who had

treated her and all she loved with such tyrannical injustice, for she regarded him as the mere tool of another who was all demon. After a time she thus spoke, as if in soliloquy :

"I would have been as much attached to Peter, poor boy, as I am to my own dear brother, if he would have permitted me, and all the information and the faculties God has given me should have been exerted for his benefit. I can truly say that, when he suffered from disease, my whole heart sympathized in his affliction, as I fully proved, for he found his wife was his only friend. My reward is before all men, and must exonerate me from lamenting the loss of one so weak and ungrateful ; nevertheless, I never have blamed, never will blame him for sending me hither, since I was thereby enabled to tender the last duties to my dear, dear mother, to fulfil her requests as to my father, and exert every effort in my power for help to each of my family."

"My child ! my own Mary !" said Menzikoff, tenderly folding her to his bosom, "you have, indeed, been everything to us all ; and, in so far as we were concerned, the decree was an act of mercy, though to you most wicked and unjust. Nevertheless, had you been left to pine after us, in ignorance of our life and the relief which, in fact, bestowed life to the remainder of us, your sufferings would have been greater than they have been. It is over ; I war not with the dead ; and, indeed, I know too well that to the living alone I owe my misfortunes. Dolgourouki, by subtlety, and in pursuance of a fixed purpose, usurped my place in the Czar's councils by pretending that affection for him which I alone of all around him really felt. He held your place also, my daughter, and excluded us alike from a due share of a weak boy's regard. Enough ; let us recollect it no longer, since we must suffer from our remembrance. I have other matters of great moment to talk upon."

Mary looked wistfully in her father's face, but spoke not.

"My friend, the Boyar, more than hinted that his son Alexovitch has formed an attachment for you, my dear Mary, and from my own observations I am convinced he was right. Notwithstanding Siberia is a divorcee by the laws of Russia, yet I could not yesterday have listened to a proposition of that kind ; but now—"

"Now and forever, dear, dear father, turn a deaf ear, I humbly, earnestly implore you, to all such overtures for your poor Mary. To you, you only, save as concerns my little Catherine, is the remainder of my life devoted. Boyars and emperors are alike indifferent to me. I will never, never marry. I have taken one husband as an act of obedience ; surely that may suffice for the most submissive daughter, seeing the suffering it cost her."

"You forget your situation, my child," said Brunkenthal.

"No, father, no ! Alas ! I remember it too well ; my heart holds itself affianced, and breaks not its engagement even with the dead, if I am at liberty to perform it. 'Tis true I am yet a minor, but I am no longer inexperienced ; though young, sorrow matures the heart and the understanding, and it hath taught me that, without love, wedlock is captivity. My heart can love none other than Theodore Dolgourouki. The obedience, the duty, the kindly attentions of af-

fection I should have paid to the Czar as life advanced—more I could not have done; and so dreadful was my sense of the bondage I owed to him, that I fully forgave his injustice in consideration of the gift it included, and hence, I doubt not, attained that strength of mind which enabled me to sustain such terrible and successive trials. That my liberty is now fully ensured by Peter's death is a blessing to me, because the same caprice which dismissed might have recalled me. Surely my earthly father will not render the gift of my heavenly Father of no avail!"

Mary spoke with a rapidity new in her, and with an agitation that was extremely affecting to her father, and Brukenthal relieved him by saying, "But, my dear, you must consider your own situation, should you be so unhappy as to lose your father? While his life is spared, it may be more agreeable to your own sense of duty, because it is evidently more for his happiness that you should be devoted to him exclusively; but if he should be taken?"

"Have I not a beloved brother, who will protect me, and whom I will serve? have I not a young sister, who was especially confided to me by my mother in the hour of death?—that angel mother! Am I not (despite my ignominious situation) a widowed empress, whom every true Russ is bound to honour? and will not the shadow of the Most High be about the creature who seeks to do his will, even in her faithfulness to the memory of his servant? My devotedness to him whom I have lost is not that of rebellion unto God's will, but of constancy under his dispensation."

The tears, the deep, yet broken tones of a voice which, moved by the heart, had power to reach the heart, rendered both her hearers for the present incapable of reply, yet they alike grievously lamented the persuasion she had adopted. In the handsome, open-hearted Alexovitch they beheld a generous and devoted lover, who could not fail to be fondly attached to a wife so intelligent and endearing; and, in the wealth and power of his family, she would not only obtain that means of helping others which was her heart's dearest wish, but that of removing to some more genial climate, and establishing those she loved in circumstances far more consonant to that of their birth than could be hoped for under any other circumstances. How could they fail to contrast her usefulness and happiness, not less than the riches and sovereignty she renounced, with the prospect of wearing out her days in the miserable hovel where she now dwelt, neither solaced by society, nor capable of imparting joy! for they now saw only the miseries and isolation of their banished state, and forgot the ameliorating circumstances of which they were wont to boast as comforts for which they were truly grateful.

Menzikoff was not unmindful that his daughter was in possession of a dower which entitled her to high consideration, and could, in the hands of the Boyar, undoubtedly be converted into money, while to them it was utterly useless, and, indeed, a subject of anxiety, as, if either seen or suspected to be in their possession, it would be too great a temptation for some of their neighbours to resist. Their unavailing and painful conversation at length wound up with a declaration from the prince "that, in case of a direct offer being made from the young

Boyar, and a direct refusal given, both himself and family would henceforth become their enemies, and their power to annoy them was such that he trembled to think of it."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Mary, warmly; "Alexovitch is of far too noble a nature to injure her he cannot win. He will be my friend, should I need one, for his heart is excellent. He is unpolished and uninformed, little calculated to be my guide and companion, even if I had known no one to whom (as such) I must have involuntarily compared him, but yet I can honour the sincerity and goodness of his nature."

These words induced Menzikoff to hope that in time his daughter might be induced to listen to one for whom he had a strong predilection; and as she had left them, and, taking Catherine by the hand, gone out to visit the lambs and inspect the corn, he mentioned the idea to Brukenthal, saying "that he intended to encourage the young man to persevere in his suit, though he would, on no account, insist on his daughter's compliance."

"You are wrong, my friend, depend upon it; for, although Mary, notwithstanding her remonstrances this morning, will eventually submit to your wishes, it will be as *your* victim, not with the feelings *he* merits. I have rarely seen the love of women under twenty very stable in its nature; but, since that of our sweet young empress has not only survived the temptations of a throne and the humiliations of a cottage—has survived her banishment and her lover's death, I must consider it of so permanent and sacred a character that I dare not disturb it. The matter had better be settled at once, and even by speaking of her as being not only attached, but engaged, for thus she holds herself. At present his love is a wandering flame, capable of changing its object, but farther intimacy would render her to him what the memory of Theodore is to her, a tie which after-life never can sever, and yet one which bare union never can satisfy, for the heart demands the heart. The young man cannot merit your daughter (I have not seen one who could), but certainly his candour and his courage in preferring an exile's daughter call upon us to guard him so far as possible from the evil consequences of his unfortunate passion."

"Besides, surely there are hopes of your recall now Peter is dead, and you would infinitely prefer seeing your children in their own country than here, however humble their station, since the means of life are with you, and the fear of God has happily subdued that fear of man, which is at once the most common and contemptible weakness of man's heart. What think you? Though it is nine months since Peter's death, so many things, after one so helpless ceased to hold the place he could not fill, would necessarily arise, that it is very possible you might not be thought of, nor your talents wanted, but yet the time may have arrived ere now when you are recalled."

"If," said Menzikoff, "the true heir is on the throne, the Dolgouruki are more triumphant than ever, and I ought to hope—I trust I do hope—such is the fact. For myself, it is far better that I should remain proscribed, and die forgotten, seeing that all who love me are around me. Who can say that, recalled to a court, and distinguished by a sovereign, excited to revenge from being gifted with power, and awakened to

pride by the possession of wealth, I might not forget the chastisements of my heavenly Father, and become again the vain, ambitious, overbearing, worldly-minded being I have been! If even my bodily weakness forbade me engaging in the toils of war or the intrigues of politics, should I not, in my pride of my son and the rank of my daughter, seek to regain for them a high position in society, and nourish my own innate sin through the medium of objects so justly dear to me, and worthy the distinctions I aimed at? Truly does the blessed book say, 'the heart is deceitful above all things,' and truly do I think my own peculiarly liable to the weakness of self-deception, and the sinfulness of falling back. Being not born to splendour, I was dazzled by it to the positive blinding of my understanding, and every accession of greatness which was bestowed upon me awoke new consciousness of personal merit; and, as I stood on high, looking round on the eminence I occupied, like Nebuchadnezzar of old, my proud heart said, 'Is not this great Babylon which I have builded for myself?' No wonder that, like him, I was driven forth from mankind!"

"But even he, my dear friend, was brought back when the days of his madness had ceased."

"True; and, like his, my madness ceased in solitude. Heavy and cutting have been the blows by which the evil spirit was crushed within me, therefore I would not that they should have fallen in vain. Otherwise I should be thankful to see again my own country (for, with all my faults, I loved and laboured for Russia), and to a certain degree live with mankind, and for them, though in an humble state of life. I do not renounce the world, dear Brunkenthal; how should I while you are with me, the truest friend, the best pastor ever man was blessed with! I only fear for myself, and shrink from temptation: nevertheless, *His* will, not mine, be done."

During the time this conversation (or, rather, various conversations) had been taking place, Alexander had been visiting the village, and joining various parties who were going to the Boyar's, and he learned from them that, contrary to the regular order of succession, the Princess Anne, in consequence of some popular or political movement, had been placed on the throne, and appeared exceedingly beloved by the people. Having always understood that the immediate heir was inimical to his father, hearing of the emperor's death had in no way affected him; but this news was altogether delightful, for Anne had always been fond of his mother, and especially attached to his sister, and was (so far as he could recollect her) amiable, sensible, and every way the reverse of Peter. "Surely she could not acquiesce in their banishment? No; release must even now be on the road: soon he should be free as the many whom he had envied yesterday for their possession of liberty and a country—all other things he felt capable of acquiring for himself."

Had Alexander heard his sister refuse his friend Alexovitch in the morning, anger and grief would undoubtedly have filled his heart, and the very excess of his love for her induced him to reproach her; but the dear hope of seeing her restored to her country, her rank, and her friends, absorbed every other feeling; and so fully had he persuaded himself such must be the case, that, on his return, he prophesied a re-

call as positively as if he were promulgating a royal mandate. His enthusiasm carried his hearers along with him, and even the two grave men of the world, accustomed to weigh and consider, allowed themselves to believe that which he foretold, and anticipate his visions for the future; nor, even in points where they felt his reasoning was fallacious, could they bear to expose it, for in the illusion there was a pleasure which cheated him into happy forgetfulness of past sufferings and present difficulties.

Well did the dear youth merit all the indulgence parental tenderness could bestow, or his own imagination suggest; for, on the following morning, the last day of the feast at the Boyar's, and to which his father had consented he should go, he resolutely set out with the dawn to search, far and wide, for cranberries, the only fruit of this steril region, and the only substance which assuaged his father's cough. This was love indeed, and can only be estimated justly by the lonely inhabitant of a solitary region, imbued with that love of society, that keen relish of pleasure, and that consciousness of merit which is natural to every human being at eighteen. It was also unprompted, for Mary had not known that her father's complaint had now returned, in consequence, most probably, of his ride at midnight; and, on rising, she concluded that her brother was willing to make the most of a day so delightful and so little likely to return, for the air was even now turbid, and the beauty of summer vanishing every hour.

When he returned, clothed in his humblest apparel, hungry and fatigued, yet smiling under a large bag, gathered in the course of many a weary mile (for their own immediate neighbourhood furnished none), the countenance of Mary shone with a pleasure and confidence not exhibited since the conversation with her father we have recorded. "Is he not a glorious boy!" she exclaimed to Brunkenthal; "how could I forsake him for my husband!"

"My kind, my noble son! what a present is this! what a sacrifice it includes! It grieves me to think you should have gone to-day."

"There was no time to lose, and few berries remained to gather, for the Boyar's people have scoured the country. Mary will give me food, and then prepare your conserve, and if you have a better night, all will be well, dear father; for, depend upon it, I shall sleep too sound for dreams to disturb me—even dreams of barbs and j erreeds, music and fair maidens."

Soon was the young man in the happy condition of which he spoke, but his father sat long meditating upon him, while Mary busied herself in preparing the sedative medicine her brother had procured. Brunkenthal took the opportunity of impressing on the mind of Menzikoff the belief that their mutual attachment would conduce more to their happiness than that union he had contemplated with so much complacence; and, as the subject necessarily led them to a retrospective view of her heart's early engagement, he not only drew from Menzikoff a particular account of what was deemed the death of Theodore Dolgouruki, but wrote it carefully down, with due dates, and a close description of the men who had so unfortunately engaged in the transaction, and caused Menzikoff to sign the paper. Ever since he received the sad story from the repentant father, as they walked alone together, he had determined on doing this, with

a full intention of laying the document before the proper authorities on his return, provided he could secure friends in authority to interfere in behalf of the hasty but well-intentioned men who might be arraigned as assassins.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It is common for the winter to set in suddenly as well as early in Siberia, and certain indications led them daily to expect a change. Menzikoff often felt that it was his duty to urge the departure of his friend, since he believed that the clothing he had purchased was intended as much for his journey as his stay, seeing that from two to three months of it must inevitably be in the winter. When, at length, he attained courage to speak on the subject, to his great relief, Brukenthal professed an intention of staying over Christmas, hoping that he then should, after passing Nishnei Novogorod, obtain occasional relief from sleighs when the snow had become thoroughly hardened.

Every day soon became one of toil to the young people, their beloved guest, and the faithful Peter, as they were called upon to stock their ice-cellar with provisions for the winter: again the snow hurtled in the air, and again vast flocks of birds traversed the arctic circle, numbers of which escaped the miseries of a lingering death from the fowling-piece of Alexander. Brukenthal applied himself to the repairs of the cottage in every crevice where the cold winds might enter and increase the sufferings of the invalid; nor was he less anxious, by employing his mind and keeping alive his faith and hope, to preserve him in the exercise of his energies and affections as a father and friend, or prepare his soul as an acceptable offering to the God who gave it.

Thus, while Mary was in her dairy duties or her cooking avocations, he was employed in teaching Catherine to read, or contriving materials with which she could hereafter write, or in penning short aphorisms on subjects of religion or practical morality for his poor neighbours, to whom they might be read in the little chapel long after its present instructors had ceased from among them; and, when he had once begun to exercise his mind in this occupation, he found interest and amusement in essays on government and plans of legislation, which he pursued for the benefit of his son. He had seen much and observed closely different men in different countries, existing under various governments, which, in some cases, controlled them to a happy end, and at once protected and improved them; while, in others, all that was great in human nature was debased and enslaved, yet by a pressure little felt and seldom resisted. To sift the wheat from the bran, to show where the strong leanings of national individuality should be permitted, to point out the political soil in which they would flourish most, was a task for which his past life had well educated him, and which his religious views alike prompted him to engage in, for the love of God leads to the love of his creatures, and the legislator is closely united to the theologian; but, alas! he had little power to pursue such designs. Very scanty had been the stock of paper brought by the travelling pedlers, and the dealers in the village numbered no such material among their wants.

Besides, the winter had set in with a terrible storm, such as, even in that region of horrors, was not remembered by the oldest inhabitant; and so severely did Brukenthal experience its effects in the first onset, that for several weeks he appeared the worst invalid of the two. It will be readily conceived how much this affected Menzikoff, who mourned over him as a martyr to his love for him, and a victim to that cruel decree which had rendered him, virtually, the destroyer of all who loved him.

Nor was sorrow for the afflictions of the good pastor confined to the house of his friend, for such was the love and veneration inspired by his instructions, his philanthropy, and that profound sense of approbation and honour an act of true heroism like his awakens, even in the most rustic minds, that sorrow prevailed in every dwelling, and prayers were offered up from every heart in his behalf; and, so long as it was possible, inquiries were made as to his progress, and offers of all possible (though unavailing) service were added; but even this degree of intercourse with mankind was soon over: the last woman who ventured was so nearly lost, that the man who followed was forbidden to come again, and commissioned to threaten all his neighbours against attempting it, on pain of the minister's displeasure. This was rendered necessary, because the rescue of the poor woman was attributed, by all around, to the sacredness of her errand; and nothing could be more probable than that others would tempt their own destruction in the hope of a miraculous interposition, so closely does superstition ally itself with the highest motives and best actions of the ignorant and well-disposed.

Brukenthal's attack was that of rheumatic fever, in which incessant bodily pain was so constant as to suspend, in a great measure, the mental faculties, or, at least, call for the exertion of their extremest powers, merely to endure its inflictions in silence. We all know that

“Sighs and tears, by nature, grow on pain;”

and, when they are uttered in consequence of bodily agony, let no one presume to suppose that the sufferer is deficient either in the resignation which is a Christian's duty, or the fortitude which becomes him as a man. It is much more possible to endure well a dreadful operation than an abiding torture; and, should the best-regulated mind, the most sanctified Christian, succumb under it, let not his fellow-worm arraign him. “Who art thou, O man, that judgest another? To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

Brukenthal endured his affliction well, as might be expected; but its severity was so written on his countenance, that every one who beheld him suffered the painfullest emotions compassion could inflict, together with the constant fear that they might be seized by the same cruel disorder, or behold Mary seized, which would have been to each nearly an equal trouble, for she seemed to all the one source of comfort, the animating mind, the ministering hand that sustained them. While Alexander had been actively engaged in beneficial pursuits, his spirits were good; but now, closely confined to the dwelling, rendered crowded and dirty by the number of animals they were obliged to admit, with the sights and sounds of sickness constantly before his eyes, in the persons of

those he loved and honoured with such tender and venerating affection, he became completely overcome by fear and sorrow. Mary had been aware that, ever since the day he had spent at the Boyar's, he had pined for the society by which he was then surrounded, and how much he had deplored his present situation, as one which precluded him from worthily pursuing the best ends of existence, and repelled the best energies of mind. She had then feared he would sink into a gloomy despondency, which might at once ruin his promising faculties, injure his temper, and destroy his health; and without him how could she sustain her languishing father! how rear that fair flower in the wilderness which now, in its artless beauty and infantine gayety, wiled away many a thought of sorrow and many an hour of weariness?

The evil she had dreaded for him seemed now to have arrived; the praise of his father, which ever nerved him to exertion, and rewarded him for it, had ceased to cheer him; for his whole attention was given to his friend, by whose couch he might be said to grow, yet wither. Brukenthal's voice was also silent, save for half-suppressed groanings; and how often had that voice, by many an anecdote of magnanimity, courage, and endurance, cheered him in his thorny path, and led his thoughts to heaven as the sure resting-place! How often, when the labours of the day were over, had the books he brought and the conversation he induced kept his mind from preying on itself, and given to his affections their happiest exercise! All this seemed fled, now the wise, kind friend was doomed to suffering it was misery to witness, and to helplessness none of the family save Peter had strength to relieve.

Perhaps, however, this humble follower had one quality still more efficient than his power of lifting the invalid, though no one accepted its benefit save Mary. Peter was knowing in the direction of the wind, the course and the continuance of storms, and by no means a stranger to the disease under which the good minister suffered, for which, he said, he could have prescribed many cures had his reverence been a common man. As Peter's first prescription was a charm, it was rejected with a rebuke by his master; but, as time passed, and no relief was obtained from the directions of Brukenthal himself (who, like most Lutheran ministers, had studied medicine for the benefit of his flock), Mary now listened patiently to the poor serf's predictions and nostrums, and, culling the wheat carefully from the chaff, which was abundant, saw the possibility of good being obtained, at least in some degree, from his prescriptions. Though the patient smiled, despite of his pain, at the various medicaments she offered, and her father expressed surprise at her folly, yet, when she said it would at least be good for herself that they should be tried, there was no resisting the appeal, and Brukenthal made over his frame to the will of Peter and his empress, wishing it had been better worth their trouble.

A bath, heated beyond all former heatings (and for which the cottage offered that convenience* esteemed beyond all others to a Russian), was the commencement of Peter's operations; and, once in possession of his subject, he took care to exhibit all his nostrums, knead-

ings, rubbings, rollings, and nippings upon him to the extent of his power, and returned him to a bed trebly heated, in a state of such perfect exhaustion that Mary trembled for the result. It so happened that a considerable reduction of the cutting cold took place; the snow fell heavily, but calmly, during the whole night, and every one of the family was sensible of a change for the better, especially the master of the house; therefore, when at length poor Brukenthal, in a voice feeble as infancy, once more spoke, demanding refreshment, all crowded around him, declaring they had no longer any fears for him; the weather was changed; in a short time he would be well again.

The patient ate as he had never done before, and, to his own astonishment, sat up, and held in his hands the food and the cup they gave him, for his memory did not appear cognizant of what had passed beyond that of having drunk some bitter infusion. Mary claimed his approval of Peter and herself, and he thanked them both; but rest and sleep were necessary before he could be sensible of the extent to which he was helped, and several days elapsed before he could join them in worship, or be seated at their board. When, however, this happy event took place—when Peter had received due praise and thanks, and been alluded to in the pastor's prayer as the instrument by which mercy had been granted, their humble follower was not only the happiest, but one of the greatest of men in his own estimation. Alexander said Peter had received a diploma which would hereafter extend the fame he had earned, the circuit of many European kingdoms. In the recovery of one patient, the anxious youth foresaw that of the other; and his spirits, once aroused from the dejection into which they had sunk, he now became the helper and enlivener of all; reproached himself for a pusillanimity which had laid all the burden of their late trial on her whose patient activity had never failed any of them, and who would have been justified in rousing him to his duty by bitter words and scornful looks, since she could not fail to see he was as much the object of blame as pity.

"I am not much of a scold," said the young empress, "but there were times when I felt a little angry with you, undoubtedly, dear Alexander; if I had spoken at all, I should have said too much, and given myself cause for repentance, and truly there was no need for that; one drop more, and the cup would have overflowed—the heart so charged must have broken."

"Dear, dear sister, how wise and good you always are! Why were you not indeed an empress? Why are you not on the throne at this moment, dealing happiness to millions?"

"Because I am wanted at home, where I am sure of doing a little good, whereas there I might have done great harm. There are always a few women in the world well calculated for such a state, and I sincerely trust our beloved country will enjoy the benefits they are capable of conferring; but, depend upon it, I could not have been one. My extreme anxiety to do right would have amounted to misery, and in that state I should have lost my temper, injured my judgment, and have gone from the extreme of humanity (to which my original nature prompted me) to deeds of violence and injustice, which I shudder to think of. Oh! my brother, if there

* See Dr. Clarke and many other travellers.

were no other alternative, welcome Siberia rather than a life of tyranny and a death of remorse."

"And to that unquestionably I doomed you, my child," said Menzikoff; "but little did I reck of your sufferings or your errors, so I might govern in your place. God has been merciful to us both; he has given to me a child I could not deserve, and denied you the crown you did not desire, and which unquestionably would have been lined with thorns to one so humble and conscientious as you."

"Yet surely, father, such a disposition is more calculated for rendering a people civilized and happy than any other, and if a person does her best to perform an arduous duty, I cannot see room for self-reproach. We must have a head for our overgrown empire, and—"

"It requires many heads," interrupted Brukenthal, "which may be usefully represented by one, but that one should be limited by the laws—*laws* the protectors of all, and to which all might apply. Absolute monarchy is a greater power than human hands can manage; even limited monarchy generally finds a good man as much to do as is consistent with his happiness and his virtue. Mary has seen enough to render her a judge of her own capabilities for such a state; and, as I really believe it to be incompatible with her happiness, I am glad she lost it; but there is a situation in life which has much power of benefiting others, and ensuring happiness to the possessor also—a nobleman's wife, residing on her lord's estates, surrounded by his people, encouraged by an enlightened and generous husband to increase their happiness, improve their situation, educate their children, become the fountain which supplies—"

"My friend, my friend! spare me, spare my father! such pictures cannot be thought on now," cried Mary, as she sunk pale and nearly fainting into her seat, and covered her face with her hands. The heart of Brukenthal was wrung with pity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The first severe snowstorm having subsided, that which fell afterward, and soon became frozen, enabled the inhabitants of the neighbouring village to go forth as pioneers, and dig through the vast snowdrifts a road to the dwelling whose inhabitants they loved so well, and for whom they had reason to fear so much. Those only who have been dwellers in the wilderness, and have felt that "a great gulf" was placed between them and their fellow-creatures, which neither party could pass, can imagine how pleasurable were the sensations of each member of our family when the masked faces of two rough peasants first entered the cottage, and, with kind solicitude, inquired "if the pastor lived, if the family were well?" and eagerly offering dried fruits, brought from Astrachan, the produce of Turkey, and tea brought from China by the Tatar tribes who traverse regions beyond the Volga.

When their sheepskin booshes and bonnets were removed, they saw with joy the most lively and sincere the recovery of the minister, though he was much reduced; but, in their eyes, which

were more faithful judges than those around him, Menzikoff was more altered for the worse. Having succeeded in opening a path to the cottage, they now proposed, with Peter's assistance, to clear a way to the chapel; but, even after this was effected, it was agreed on all hands that it would be unsafe for the convalescent to venture thither; and as the weather admitted removing their animals to the neighbouring barn, this was done to the relief and comfort of the family; and it was settled that, on the following Sabbath, the neighbours should assemble in the cottage. So completely had the late formidable storm separated the scanty and scattered inhabitants of this deplorable country, that fears were entertained for the safety of all around them, and nothing could, as yet, be known of the state of the Boyar's family or people, since the ridge of rock which in some measure protected them was utterly impassable.

"That it must be," exclaimed Alexander, "or my friend Alexovitch would have been here before this; he told me when the people were all gone he should come hither every day."

Mary heard this with pain, and a sigh escaped her, but she did not speak.

It was a day memorable to all when the villagers once more assembled for the purpose of public worship, since all met under the impression that they had been in imminent danger—that the "destroying angel" had passed over them, and shaken the very springs of life. There was fervency of petition in their prayers and gratitude in their praises meet for a flock so cut off from the great mart of humanity, and cast on the immediate care of Him "who wilth not that any should perish;" and when Brukenthal, commenting on their late danger, read from the New Testament, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows, yet not one of them falleth to the ground but your heavenly Father knoweth," every heart was moved with devout thankfulness and holy joy. When the service was past, these visitants were alike struck by the attenuated form of Menzikoff and the weakness of his voice. They remarked, also, the increased placidly of his fine countenance, the cheerfulness with which he welcomed them and received their congratulations on his friend's amendment. His anxiety for their improvement, his own warmth in devotion, his humility and sincerity, the happy tranquillity with which they saw he was approaching the grave, at a time when life is generally most stable and frequently most dear, made an impression on them of the most abiding character, as confirmatory of all they had been taught by their pastor. Many a blessing was mingled with their adieus—many a tear froze on the rough cheeks of these sons of the desert, as they retraced the snow to their humble dwellings, at once comforted and affected by their observance of the sacred day.

The time had now arrived when Mary's extremest care failed to tempt the languid appetite of her father; nevertheless, her efforts were ever rewarded with smiles and blessings; and when Alexander brought the warm goat's milk, which he mixed with the tea his neighbours so opportunely brought, the same paternal benedictions were poured on his head as that of the little Catherine, who had learned to watch his every look, obey the motion of his eye, and endeavour to amuse his weariness, or be silent as his meditations required. The

band of disease now fell on him lightly, though surely ; and often did he, with due thankfulness, advert to his own slight sufferings compared with those of his friend in the late attack, or the accumulated troubles of travel and disease which had destroyed the delicate frame of that beloved wife on whom he was continually dilating as the best of her sex—one “ whom he had neglected and thwarted, yet never ceased to esteem and love, so far as love could influence a bosom absorbed by ambition.” So happy and tranquil did he now frequently appear, that his children could not believe his illness continued to progress. Some miraculous interposition is ever expected by the young, who slowly resign the hope which clings like life to the heart, and Mary would frequently demand, by anxious looks and whispered words, from Brukenthal the confirmation of her suppositions. The slowly-shaken head, the look of pity glanced on both, forbade her to increase her sufferings by adding disappointment to sorrow.

The first day on which it was possible to overcome the impediments which divided them, a messenger of extraordinary strength and resolution arrived at the cottage from the Boyar. He was the bearer of a letter to Menzikoff, in which the passion of Alexovitch was declared, and the hand of his daughter entreated in the most respectful manner by the father, who expressed, in the warmest terms, his sense of her merits, and trusted that, in case of his own recall, which he hoped might soon take place (seeing that the empress was said to be just and humane), the princess would find in himself and his wife parents as kind and considerate as her own could possibly have been.

Mary was engaged with Peter in nursing a sick calf when this letter arrived, for which the friends were glad ; for, although her father despaired entirely of the recall he desired on her account, and still felt the value of the Boyar's protection to all his family, he acquiesced in the opinion of Brukenthal, and determined to spare his daughter the pain of disputing his wishes, or the consequences of conceding to them. He was not only resigned to God's will as regarded himself, but he felt capable of trusting to his providence the future disposal of his family, seeing clearly how fallacious his own views had been, and believing, in the depth of his humility, that the child playing at his feet was nearly as wise and prescient as himself.

In the letter which he addressed to the Boyar, he declined the honour of an alliance in his daughter's name, and accounted for an act so unprecedented in a young female by informing him that she was the empress whose death had been falsely reported, and that, after solemnly tendering to her allegiance as a subject, he could not compel her to obedience as a daughter, more especially as he had long known that she had abjured all thoughts of marriage, and, if recalled, would probably adopt religious seclusion. He concluded by referring to his own weakness, and entreating the continued kindness of the Boyar to a family that must soon be orphans, and well merited his regard, notwithstanding the impossibility of a nearer connexion.

Mary saw this messenger depart with the letter, and could not fail to conclude she was herself the object of the Boyar's mission ; but, as

her father was silent on the subject, she did not doubt that he had complied with her request, yet done so with difficulty, for he was evidently much worse than he had yet been. Acute were the pangs this observation inflicted, for at this moment any sacrifice seemed too little ; but Brukenthal, who read her every feeling, imputed the evident sinking of the patient to personal fatigue, saying, “ they had both had great trouble in finding a little paper, and that the wind was become some degrees colder, as all were sensible ;” and she ventured to comfort herself with the belief that the change could not justly be imputed to a daughter so devoted to her father, and so devoid of all other comfort.

But the following day, to her great surprise and dismay, both the Boyar and his son made their appearance about midday at the cottage, although their appearance indicated the difficulties and even danger of their journey. For the first time, Menzikoff had on that day declined rising from his bed ; and although, from his letter, the friendly visitants had expected finding him very ill, this situation struck and affected them exceedingly. The circumstance of seeing Mary for the first time arrayed in the dress of the country, and engaged in performing menial offices, inflicted on Alexovitch a more distressing emotion still, beautiful as she appeared even thus disfigured, and he held her in higher esteem for the patient sweetness with which she bore her sad destiny, and thus lightened her father's burden.

The Boyar, led by Brukenthal, proceeded to visit the prince ; and Mary, having disposed of her culinary preparations, sat down with her eyes cast towards the door, and the observation on her lips “ that Alexander would soon be there.”

“ I do not wish for your brother just now, much as I love him. You have refused me, dear lady, and I did not mean to do more on this occasion than prove my good-will and deep interest in your father ; but now that I find him much worse than my fears had depicted—that I see you on the eve of becoming an orphan, surrounded by so many heart-breaking circumstances, how can I forbear to avow my love, to offer you the comforts of a home—below (far below) your merits and your rank, 'tis true, but oh ! how different to this, and how much better than that of courts, for it will be permanent ! We can offer you all things except climate, and yet our situation is wonderfully better than this ; and I swear to you that, should your health require it, I will wander with you over the wide world to find that where you could repose in safety ; this promise my father will confirm to yours. Do not refuse me, dearest Mary ; my mother will love you as she loves me ; we will devote our lives to soothe your sorrows, and recall happiness to your bosom.”

Mary only answered by a grateful but melancholy smile ; and the young lover, with all the impassioned ardour natural to one agitated alike by love and pity, fervently continued :

“ Think not for a moment I would divide you from your father ! no, he is scarcely less the object of my love and veneration than your own ; and I am well aware that the last sands of life must run out cheered and consoled by you. Doubt not I can wait for you as the patriarch of old waited for his bride, were it needful ; and you well know our ample mansion hath

room for all ; Alexander will be the brother of Alexovitch, who has long desired a partner in his sports. Catherine will be the companion of Iwonowna and Anna ; you will be the idolized of all—the empress we honour, the darling we love ; say but one word, one *little* word, to encourage my hope, and I will say not another till the good father Brukenthal again permits me."

Mary was exceedingly affected by this honest effusion of a heart whose sincerity she could not doubt, and whose powers to benefit herself and all she loved were as ample as his professions, since the Boyar lived but in his son. Nor could she suppose that any possible injury could arise to him from his kindness to an exiled family from the present empress, who might be forgetful, but would never be malignant. But one thought of the murdered Theodore put the leanings of the moment to flight ; she could not by any self-sacrifice restore health, life, and enjoyment to her father—her brother. Neither would demand it, nor had the right. Who should say that, after the lapse of many years, they might not be recalled ? or that another winter, so severe as this, might not lay her also a victim beside the mother and sister she had so tenderly loved ; and enable her, in unsullied purity, to meet the approving spirit of her beloved Theodore ? She replied in a calm voice, as her mind rose above the sorrows and troubles which had bewildered her :

" Kind, generous Alexovitch, I have not words with which to thank you, either on my own account or that of the dear family to whom I well know your protection would be a blessing. I desire no higher state than that truly noble one you offer me, but in truth I cannot accept it, for I have not even a heart to offer in return. You have a rival whom your love and goodness, however great, cannot displace ; and though I must never see him more on earth, yet the fixed purpose of my heart is that of holding him as my affianced lord. Try, then, to conquer this unfortunate predilection, which cannot have taken in your mind any deep root—seek out in your dear mother's country some fair and gentle girl who will adopt your faith, win the love of your parents, and be dear to me as a sister, for I shall henceforth hold you as a friend and brother."

The deep melancholy and subduing tenderness with which these words were uttered assured the young Boyar that for his suit there was no hope, save that which would have been neither flattering to his self-love, nor desirable to one so generous and magnanimous. Little as he knew of the world or of the human heart, and suddenly chilled as his feelings were, he yet ceased not to pity and sympathize with one so painfully situated, and saw that it was his duty to be silent. Gently taking her hand, which he respectfully raised to his lips, and looking on her with eyes filled with tears, he followed his father's steps to gaze for the last time on the most remarkable man he had ever known, or could expect to see, in his native country.

When the good Boyar and his son had departed, Menzikoff desired that no other person might be admitted to his chamber. He yet expressed himself extremely gratified by the interview which had taken place with his friends, and spoke particularly in high terms of Alexovitch, saying, " that whatever might be the eventual result of his attachment to his daugh-

ter, the belief that he was of a constant nature, and likely to find no rival to her attractions in the country, was a comfort to his heart : his sincere desire was to leave all care of his children in the hands of his heavenly Father ; and he received this circumstance of Alexovitch's devotedness to Mary and her family as a gift from above, granted in answer to his long-continued prayers."

Had his beloved child been present when he was thus speaking of his solicitude on her account, and his reference to many an hour of terrible anxiety, only conquered of late by the mixed exercise of this earthly hope with heavenly faith, she would, undoubtedly, in the melting sorrows of her heart, have promised full and unlimited obedience and compliance with his wishes—she would have purchased an hour of gladdened life to him by the sacrifice of her own long-cherished wishes for future life. In doing this she would have undoubtedly done wrong, for the most unselfish and devoted have duties to themselves, and many a promise made on a deathbed has compromised the happiness and the virtue of the survivor ; but woman rarely reasons justly when she feels acutely ; her nature is not only capable, but subject to self-abandonment, in which a moment of agony forges chains that may bind her to an eternity of suffering.

Happily for Mary, the personal conversation was held with Brukenthal, who rejoiced that she was not moved to say anything which could bind her to any future line of conduct, and who took care to represent to her father the necessity of leaving her free to follow the dictates of her own excellent understanding, in a case where its decision was so important. He still nourished hopes of a recall, thinking nothing more probable than that the consequences of the late storm prevented the arrival of messengers : he was by no means so persuaded of the death of Theodore Dolgourouki as Menzikoff appeared to be, and had adopted the belief that he had by some means become an inhabitant of that terrible prison on the banks of the Neva, to which the fisherman had professed an intention of conveying him. Who could say that a man like Ivan Dolgourouki had not rendered the name of Menzikoff subservient to the purpose of removing a cousin whose courage and conduct in a single campaign had thrown his own management of the war with Persia completely into the shade ? He had evidently been the utter ruin of Menzikoff, with whom he had personally had no collision ; and, in persecuting to positive ruin one so blameless and loveable as his innocent daughter, had shown a disposition of cruelty so positively demoniacal, that any possible plan of evil might be attributed to him, and expected from his abilities and his wickedness.

Should this conjecture be right, it was yet little likely that a high-spirited young man, in the very prime of life, could have survived for so long a period that soul-subduing, heart-crushing torture inflicted by close imprisonment—unquestionably the severest of all punishment in early life, and which would be rendered the worse to him by the knowledge of Mary's marriage, and the belief that he was a victim to her father's ambition. If he were indeed dead, whatever might have been his misfortunes, since she knew them not, 'twere pity

she refused Alexovitch ; yet so pure and hal-lowed was her devotion to Theodore's memory, so well had she performed her painful duties as dictated by her sainted mother, that it seemed a sin to him to thwart her inclinations, and therefore he again pressed on his dying friend the necessity of leaving her to herself.

"I leave them all to him who will do better for them than either themselves or their father, and I doubt not the issue. Hath he not said, 'Leave thy fatherless children, and I will provide for them.' Why then should I doubt, though forgotten now, they will be remembered hereafter ? and though far from the temptations of their father's unhappy elevation, they have now that freedom from both riches and poverty which ensures content and thankfulness."

As Mary was not only the cook of the family, but dairy-woman, and the concocter of her father's medicines, she could not always watch by his bedside, as Brukenthal did, to her great relief; but every moment, when she obtained a temporary release, she hastened thither, and by her presence evidently communicated to the drooping invalid the only earthly pleasure he could receive. Generally speaking, his mind was clear and collected, and his reminiscences of the past, his hopes for the future, and his reasonings on the present, betokened the most perfect understanding; but, after he awoke from the short and imperfect slumbers he now but seldom enjoyed, his senses often wandered for a little time, during which he would address her as his wife, and Brukenthal as his still venerated benefactor, Peter the Great. At such times he would speak of his early love with a tenderness and fondness which reminded her of days long past, when Theodore had uttered words of similar import to herself, or he would unfold to his royal master those ambitious plans which for so many years were perpetually floating in his mind, and have since been executed by spirits as daring and unscrupulous as his own. He often spoke at such times with an exulting air, as if enjoying some prospect offered by his imagination, and seemed again in idea the inhabitant of a magnificent palace, surrounded by the slaves of his will ; but when the hectic subsided which had raised these temporary illusions, and he beheld himself an infirm old man, the inhabitant of a cottage in Siberia, with his daughter the empress, arrayed in sheep-skins, standing by him, he was thankful that his senses were restored, and prayed earnestly that he might retain to the last those faculties which would enable him to estimate his situation justly, and enable him with clear faith and profound humility to obey the call which he every hour expected to receive.

This was granted, together with many other painful peculiarities of the disorder, which retired as death approached ; and although such phases may be common to the complaint, they were received by him as peculiar mercies, and awakened that devout thankfulness it is the privilege of the humble, trusting sinner to experience. Often, when Mary's sweet voice, aided by the deeper tones of Alexander, rose to heaven in the words of his favourite hymns, he too would join them, to the astonishment of Brukenthal, who thought that his spirit would pass away at the moment ; but the end was not yet.

Again there was a terrible storm, and poor Peter was so nearly lost in trying to collect his

fleecy charge, that Alexander and Brukenthal were both injured in effecting his rescue ; and Mary, distracted by so many claimants on her cares, was obliged to leave the principal object to the child. Menzikoff became instantly alive to the wants of all, and, by his judicious directions, all were assisted, though he vainly tried to rise from his couch and help the terrified females. Peter had been found by Alexander, apparently dead, in a snowdrift, and, despairing of effecting his release alone, he flew to the house, and called the kind friend whose reduced strength was little equal to the task. By dint of great exertion they drew the poor serf out, and, perceiving there was life still in the body, endeavoured to rouse him and place him on his feet ; but, though they got him to speak, and even recognise them, this was found impossible, and they were compelled to drag or bear him to the cottage, which the new-fallen snow rendered a work of extreme difficulty, and which they were on the point of relinquishing every moment, as the piercing air in a short time rendered them more torpid and listless. Mary, alarmed for Peter, went to the door with cordials in her hand, but she could not proceed for the thick fall of snow ; but her clear voice was heard calling aloud, as if in great distress, and it awoke the energy which alone could save them ; they staggered forward, the gentlemen dragging Peter between them, who fell down the moment they reached the open door, and they too fell beside him, utterly helpless, and apparently either dying or dead.

"Drag them within, if possible, my child, and let the sheep lie down upon them ; they will do so willingly on Peter and your brother, who feed them. Catherine, do not be frightened, pinch their noses and their ears, raise their heads, pour brandy slowly into their throats through my teapot—very slowly ; use all your strength to get each within, and close the door, for the air is killing me also. Let the first who shows sense be compelled to rise, even by blows, dear Mary, that he may help the rest. Ah ! how hard is it my limbs refuse to aid me at such a moment, when my son, my friend—"

"Father, take comfort—Peter is awake," cried Mary.

And Peter listened to the promises of his young mistress : he started up, he took the brandy she offered, dragged Brukenthal to the stove by a violent effort, and began to rub him lustily. The fleecy animals that were stretched over their young master had already warmed his frozen limbs ; and the sweet child, that alternately kissed, pinched, and hugged him, rejoiced in hearing him groan under her innocent inflictions. Mary hastened to his aid ; she had already raised his head, and she now found, with inexpressible emotions, that he could swallow, and, with Catherine's aid, she dragged him also to the stove, and at this moment she found her father standing beside her—a miracle seemed wrought in her behalf, or, rather, in that of the sufferers around them.

Its effect on Peter was truly wonderful ; he seemed to consider the presence of his master supernatural, and he obeyed his dictates not only with the docility of obedience, but skill ; he was now aware that the sufferers before him had become such from their humane exertions on his behalf, and had an indistinct recollection of their having carried him, and that therefore

they had toiled while he had rested. He had been in danger more than once from the same cause years ago, and he tried to recall the process which had saved himself and others, and lost no time in obtaining a basket of snow, with which he began eagerly to rub the face and head of the minister, calling aloud on the princess to follow his example with Alexander.

Mary obeyed his prescription, more especially on the ears of him who now lay like a log, but still a faintly-breathing log, before her, for she had perceived that they were frozen, and had heard from many, since she entered this wretched country, of the efficacy of the application. In a short time Alexander became sensible of her care, and entreated her to continue them; and Brukenthal, who was better protected by his clothing, raised himself and looked wistfully around him. His eyes first fell on Menzikoff, whom his daughter had placed in his accustomed seat, and whose brilliant orbs, beaming with unnatural light, were bent on the ghastly countenance of his friend. It is certain, at that moment, Brukenthal knew not whether he was an inhabitant of this world, or had passed into another state of existence.

Alexander became animated—conscious; he too gazed on the beloved face he had never expected to behold in the accustomed seat, and suddenly exclaimed, "Father—dear father!"

Menzikoff fainted, and was falling on the floor, when Peter caught him. The loud, reiterated shrieks of Catherine painfully completed the restoration of all; though all were weak and ill, yet they became alive to the sad situation of that beloved one who, in the energy of affection, had quitted even his deathbed to administer to their wants and troubles. Brukenthal took his wasted form in his arms, and, assisted by Peter, bore him to his bed; and as Mary insisted that it was a swoon, and not the death she dreaded, which had seized him, the usual remedies were applied, and no long time elapsed before their apprehensions for the present were removed.

Many questions were asked, many explanations attempted to be given, but it could only be ascertained that fatigue and cold had placed the life of each person in the most imminent danger, and rendered it extremely probable that the man appointed to die should have outlived all the others of his household. That not one had perished, when all had been so perilled, was a source of the sincerest congratulation to each other, and of thankfulness to God; but none of the family appeared to feel it with such deep gratitude as Menzikoff. The whole of the ensuing night he spoke of it continually to Mary, who never left him for a moment, and earnestly advised the three late sufferers to give themselves up to that sleep which was likely to prove their best restorative. She listened with astonishment to his recital of his alarm, his efforts, and, at length, his success, in leaving his couch in order to assist her; and with not less interest as he spoke of her utter destitution had the sufferers been indeed taken at such an awful period, or of the great loss the rest must have sustained in the removal of any. As he spoke, his countenance glowed with holy joy; his pale, thin features, though sharp, were formed as by the sculptor's chisel, and the long beard, which had been uncut since his arrival in Siberia, descending like flakes of waving silk, and white as

snow, upon his bosom, completed the picture of beautiful and premature old age he exhibited. "Could my father's enemies see him now," thought Mary, "in what a light would their actions appear to themselves! could my dear mother behold him, would she not 'see of the travail of her soul and be satisfied'! for surely it has rarely happened that more of heavenly resignation and earthly affections have ever mingled benignantly in any human being than in him so inestimably dear, and so soon to be removed. Yet who shall say he must die? there is still a germe of strength, or he could not have done what he did!"

Alexander was the first to appear at his father's couch with kind inquiries, and thereby enabled his sister to enter on her duties. He had slept well himself, and was conscious of the value of repose, and learned, with sorrow, that neither his father nor sister had enjoyed any. Menzikoff said it was the natural effect of the shock they had received; but, when Mary had prepared the morning meal, he might, after taking it, be disposed to sleep. He seemed to look with especial delight upon his son as an immediate gift from heaven, and said words were wanting to express the intensity of his feelings; nor were his expressions less fervid when Brukenthal presented himself, though he grieved to see him looking ill, and shaken exceedingly by the late misfortune.

When Mary appeared, bringing in her hand the fragrant infusion of the herb he liked so much, he dismissed them to their morning meal, saying that "one person at a time was as much as he had pleasure in conversing with." At his request, she read morning prayers from Brukenthal's book, and chanted, in a low tone, several of David's Psalms; and while she still knelt and held his hand, had the satisfaction of seeing him drop into a calm sleep, which could not fail to be beneficial, and which he had long vainly wished to enjoy. Truly happy in the circumstance, she flew down to announce the tidings, and recommend all possible stillness, and then resumed her station, kneeling by the mattress, and holding the attenuated hand that emerged beyond the bedclothes.

For nearly two hours the sense of pain and weakness, of true penitence, yet deep solicitude, thus found a sweet oblivion, when, gently awaking, he fixed his eyes upon his daughter, and said,

"Are you still watching me, my good Mary?"

"Yes, dear father; and most sincerely have I enjoyed seeing you sleep so long and so sweetly."

"My heavenly Father has been very merciful to me in granting this refreshing rest; he has answered the prayer of David to me, 'Give me a little strength ere I go hence and am no more seen.' I have also had sweet visions, my child: your mother and sister, and many spirits of the 'just made perfect,' have been around me—they are around me even now."

"My mother and my sister!" cried Mary, awe-struck, and casting a timid glance; "and saw you not another, dear father, also?"

"Methought I saw many, child—the angels of God are a mighty host."

"But you saw Theodore—my Theodore, father? Say you saw him also?"

"I beheld him not, my love; and now all, all are faded away; nevertheless, my trust fadeth

not, for it is fixed upon a rock, even the 'angel of the new covenant.' Mary, my beloved ! true copy of thy excellent mother, thou hast fulfilled her bidding—say, wert thou not alone with dear Ulrica at the last awful moment ?"

"I was, dear father."

"Then abide with me in silence. He to whom thy heart is now ascending will sustain thee. Let us kiss one another, my child."

Mary, in trembling haste, rose and pressed her lips to her father's, but she could not speak.

"Farewell, my love ! thy father's blessing be on thee—on all of ye. Rejoice ! thy father is plucked as a brand from—"

The voice ceased ; the hand fell cold and lifeless from her own ; there was neither groan nor breath.

Menzikoff, the once conquering general, the powerful prince, the ambitious statesman, the wily courtier, was no more !

Menzikoff, the self-abased, humble penitent, lives, as we trust, forever, through Him to whom alone he looked for acceptance and redemption.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The stillness above continued so long, that little Catherine, as being the lightest of foot, was sent to see if her father continued to sleep. She returned to say "she found Mary kneeling by the bed, but her face was hidden, and papa neither spoke nor slept."

They flew to relieve the weeping girl ; they saw that all was over, and felt, as we all do when death arrives (however long expected), as if the stroke were sudden, and an unlooked-for sorrow had fallen upon us. Poor Alexander wept as he had never wept before.

Yet, as the passion of grief subsided, a deep sense of Almighty goodness pervaded all their minds ; and so purified by suffering, so holy in aspiration did they deem the father and friend they had lost, that they might be said to partake the joys of angels, and to rejoice over the sinner who had repented. Yet his place was void on the hearth, his kind, weak voice was heard no more ; there were no wants to supply, no thanks and blessings to receive.

If, in a wide circle, the head of a family is taken away, how large a space does he appear to have occupied ! for how many purposes is he required ! the affections of the heart and the necessities of station alike demand his love and his assistance ; all wisdom and all kindness seemed to have had their centre in him alone. But how much more is this the case in a small and fondly-united family, especially a reduced, afflicted one, robbed of every comfort save the society of each other ! whose privations were endured, whose energies were exerted, in connexion with that now severed tie.

But how invaluable was the presence of Brukenthal to the orphans of that friend whom he had loved so long, so tenderly, and with effects so happy ! His every request was a dear command they hastened to obey, and his words of consolation were a cordial to their hearts. They saw, with a sorrow which drew them from their own more immediate trouble, that he had been greatly injured by his late trial, and every effort they could make for his relief was

put into immediate requisition, for "was he not friend, father, all ?" If their father could speak, how would he urge them to a dutiful regard for his inestimable Brukenthal ! " The good man saw their anxiety, and hastened to relieve it, by assuring them that rest alone was necessary for the relief of his over-taxed frame, and that witnessing their acquiescence to the Divine will would do much to restore his wonted equanimity ; " nevertheless, my children," he added, " tears are nature's tribute to affection, more especially at your age, and I blame not those which, at this early period, so naturally flow for the father you love, the exile, you pity ; but I trust even now you feel the best consolation of mourners, you no not sorrow 'as those who have no hope.' "

The storm still raged ; no human being could approach to tender service, and the late danger and present bereavement of the family were alike unknown to their friendly neighbours. Poor Catherine's heart-breaking questions concerning the dear papa who no longer spoke or looked at his "own little girl," told them the necessity of at least hiding for a time the long-loved form from her eyes, though they could not bury it. Peter, with difficulty, mustered a few planks when he went out to fodder the cattle and succour the sickly sheep ; and, when his sisters and Brukenthal had retired (the latter occupying a mattress beside the dead), poor Alexander assisted the affectionate serf to construct a coffin for his last parent, tears often interrupting his melancholy task, and moments of terrible agony arising from the belief that, one after another, the whole of his doomed family would perish in the wilderness, as their parents had done before them. Under such terrible circumstances, it was indeed a difficulty for the faith or the philosophy of eighteen years to offer resistance adequate to the pressure of the affliction.

The body was, on the following day, wrapped in the habiliments prepared for the late summer, and, after receiving many a last lingering look, and many a tender kiss, placed for the present in their little bath, and covered with whatever the anxious daughter could procure likely to preserve it from injury or indicative of respect. There was, alas ! no power of expending money, or procuring help to effect her purpose ; they were now completely isolated, and the numbing cold was a source of suffering to every member of the narrowed circle, although Brukenthal was the only one considered an actual invalid.

Perhaps this very circumstance might have its use to Mary, whose active kindness, being kept alive by his necessities, enabled her also to sustain the spirits of Alexander, who was subject to paroxysms of grief the most distressing. Three melancholy weeks had thus passed when the wind changed, the snow ceased, and a comparatively mild state of air succeeded, which had an immediate effect on all, but especially Brukenthal, whose power of joining their meals, of manifesting his love and approbation, and from the ample stores of his well furnished mind exciting the powers of theirs, was a blessing none less forlorn, bereaved, and isolated can possibly conceive. The prayers again uttered in his voice cheered their sunken hearts, awaking hope and stimulating devotion ; and when he was seated in their father's chair, with

Catherine on her stool beside him, they felt as if the chasm was in some measure filled up in their circle, the aching void in their hearts supplied with a father they could love and reverence.

From the time the snow ceased to descend so terribly as of late, Peter was indefatigable in clearing it from the fold, beyond which he was forbidden to go, much as his heart yearned towards his fleecy companions, numbers of which had doubtless perished. His first great care was to clear a path to the chapel, and, by Brukenthal's advice, Alexander partook his toil, in order to invigorate himself by exercise, from which he had now been so long debarred entirely; and, sorrowful as his task was, its utility was soon perceived. The little building in which their father had wrought so earnestly, and which he had bequeathed to his neighbours with prayers for their future welfare, was, to their great satisfaction, found to be less injured than could have been expected from the extraordinary severity of the winter; and the young man proceeded with renewed spirits to clear the snow from the roof, repair cracks and crevices which had admitted it, and render the building that which he believed his father would have desired to see it; and, to the great gratification of the family, he related his account of these labours for the first time in his accustomed voice, and with the air of one who would henceforth neither be wanting to them nor to himself, yet there was about him a something which said, "it was only by enterprise that he could battle with despair."

Now the road was cleared, the very first day in which Brukenthal durst venture to meet the external air, he proposed that they should inter their precious dead; and although all felt that, while they retained the loved remains, they had still something dear, yet they were convinced that it was right, and, in fact, more respectful to give them due sepulture, and of course consented immediately.

Alexander went forth to make the last preparations, and Peter and Catherine followed him. While Brukenthal retired to his room, and sought to compose his spirits for a task so awful by prayer and meditation, Mary seized the opportunity of doing for the last time that which she had often done before; she gazed on the rigid features long so dear, and still read there the same expression which marked them in the hour of death. The calm countenance of Menzikoff exhibited neither pain nor fear; no enmity had place in his heart, no regret pervaded it at the time of his decease but a holy, unassuming trust, the result of true repentance; deep humility and Christian faith were still visible in the ice-bound face over which his daughter laid the only relic (save one) which she had saved from her mother's person, a handkerchief of the finest cambric.

When Brukenthal descended, he found Mary thus performing what she held to be a hallowed rite; and, taking her hand in silence, he pointed to some necessary wrappers in which she began to envelop herself, while he proceeded to spare the feelings of Alexander by closing the coffin himself. The sounds he was compelled to make drew the attention of those within the chapel, and though they shuddered, yet each party, however different in relationship, station, and perception, felt thankful that they had escaped

the task, and repaired, when it was over, to do that which remained.

Brukenthal stepped slowly onward, and, Alexander at the head, Peter at the feet, followed with the coffin; while Mary and Catherine, hand in hand, each shrouded in her bonoche, followed close behind. Brukenthal, in a low, but solemn, though broken voice, pronounced the exordium by which his Church, in all countries, so beautifully speaks of the vanity of life, the reality of immortal existence, and the hopes of eternal happiness. He prayed for like peace enjoyed by the departed under the same awful circumstances; and not only did every one breathe forth a deep Amen, but each, glancing around, saw sickness in the face of the other, and trembled for the future.

Having ceased to speak, Brukenthal rose from his knees, and, taking the hand of Catherine, returned to the house; but Mary waited to see the coffin in its last home, and look on those of the mother and sister they had lost. She lingered over her sad employment as if to do it honour, for how could she forbear to contrast the obsequies of Menzikoff as they were with what they would have been as Prince of Ingria and Plescoff, Generadissimo and Prime Minister of Catherine. Again the celebration of the emperor's funeral rose to her mind, the sonorous music rolled on her ear, and she exclaimed, "He is fallen! he is fallen!"

Alexander caught her hand, and, pressing it tenderly, said, "Yes, he is indeed fallen, but only to rise more glorious. We must now close the vault—there is room for one more coffin!"

The words fell coldly on the ear and heart of Mary. Alexander had outgrown his strength, his sorrow had been excessive, and he looked so pale at this moment, she felt as if he thought the place was ready for himself; but her sad presentiment was interrupted by Peter, who said earnestly,

"Yes, there is room for *one*; dear master, let that one be me. The good minister declares that rich and poor are alike in the eyes of God; why then should they not mingle in the dust? Promise me, good young master (for you are my master now), and you, sweet lady, promise me me!"

"Alas! Peter, I know not what to say. I may myself desire to lie by my sister."

"But you will all die afar off! Did he not say so? Ay, even to his poor Peter would he say, 'It is meet I should be punished, but my innocent children shall return to the land of their nativity'; and he was never wrong."

The earnestness, solemnity, and perfect confidence with which the poor man uttered these words, had a happy effect on both brother and sister, and somewhat relieved them from the fears each had so lately entertained for the other, and with one voice they gave him a conditional promise that the place should be his if not wanted for another of the family. To Peter this was perfectly satisfactory, and he spoke of their removal, and how great would be his loss in them, at once with the sorrow of attachment and the confidence of inspiration.

Peter so seldom spoke more than the animals to whom his cares were devoted, that his words made a strong impression, and appeared to their weakened and long-harassed spirits really prophetic, and were eagerly repeated to Brukenthal, who could not damp their hopes by reason-

ing on the fallacy of such impressions. He well knew that they had need of every comfort, however transitory, their sad state admitted; and that it was only by raising the mind above the appalling circumstances which surrounded them that either their health or their senses could be preserved, especially now their strongest motive for exertion was removed. He was himself not less inclined than them to catch at any shadow which gave hope of removal from this howling wilderness, of whose horrors he had partaken so largely, this winter being far more severe than the last; but not for a single moment did he repent either his miserable journey or his present sufferings, for the memory of his heart's rich reward was with him a fountain of consolation and thankfulness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

As the inhabitants of the village knew that the situation in which they had last seen Menzikoff precluded all hope of his life, so soon as it was possible a few of the more hardy made their way to the cottage, and testified sincere sympathy with the inhabitants, being especially grieved that they had not assisted at the funeral of him they venerated so truly. They had, however, the good sense to avoid awakening the sorrow of the survivors unnecessarily; and, on seeing the languid state of Alexander, urged him to go out with them on the morrow, in order to procure furs for their taxes, saying, "the snow was hardening, and old inhabitants like them would be to him not only guides, but protectors, in case of accidents like that which befell Peter."

"I had need do something," said young Menzikoff, "for many of our flock have perished during this terrible winter; and I earnestly desire to keep the evils of poverty from adding to my sister's troubles; therefore, if Mary will look less sad, I will join you to-morrow."

Neither Mary nor Brakenthal could forget the last danger, but, having great reliance on his associates, they consented, and were rewarded by the extraordinary success he met with, and the impetus given to his spirits and his appetite. So rapid was his improvement, that, for a short space in the middle of the day (which was now only three hours long), Brakenthal again breathed the keen air, either to assist Peter or accompany his young master, and the same benefit was experienced by him, and they all began to rejoice in their power of endurance and their hope of eventual relief.

The Boyar visited them soon, though at considerable risk, and brought them presents of whatever could add to their comfort. He had not only a sad story to hear, but one to relate; for his lady had been brought to the point of death by the cutting cold of the late storm, and, though now recovering, yet he felt assured that, as the native of a mild climate, she would never bear another winter in Siberia; and that, however painful it might be to himself, it was his duty to remove several hundred versts for her sake.

As he said these words, he looked earnestly on Mary, as if he were thinking how much she too might be benefited by such a change, under certain circumstances; but he did not advert to the past, nor mention his son, save to say how much Alexovitch desired the company of Alex-

ander. Much also did those he addressed wish that the young men could have had unrestrained intercourse; and Brakenthal eagerly questioned the Boyar as to what might be deemed the privileges of an exile, who could not be deemed a criminal; but, as he had never held intercourse with any of these unhappy people, save the late prince, he knew no more than the good pastor himself; but was, like him, greatly impressed with the horror of the mines as a punishment, which, in case of irregularity, he had understood, might be inflicted by the governor of the province. The honest man who governed the village was not an object of fear, but of his superior, resident at Berenzof, they knew nothing.

When the good Boyar had departed, long and anxiously did Brakenthal meditate, as he had often done before, on the possibility of this innocent family escaping from this horrid country, crossing the Volga, and, as soon as possible, quitting the dominions of Russia. They had a horse and a mule on which the females might travel, for Peter could construct a sledge or two; and, as he was not only faithful, but mingled some cunning with much simplicity, he might so keep up the usual appearance of the cottage that no suspicion of their removal might arise for many days. But yet, where could they sleep in that wild, thinly inhabited country, save in the places of regular resort? and, during the short days, how short must their stages be! If they waited till summer, the usual number of pedlers would be traversing every path; the postmasters would be alarmed by their babbling conjectures; arrest would follow; and every one knew that escape from Siberia never failed to be followed by sanguine and perpetual punishment. If Alexander was sent to the mines, his sisters would be sent to their graves by the same sentence.

Brakenthal himself, then, was the only free agent; he could return to his own country; and surely, when there, he could make some effort for the liberation of these young and innocent creatures, whom the breath of slander had never visited, and whose father had suffered the last punishment tyranny could inflict. Though he had long lived far away from courts and camps, he had many acquaintance in both, some of whom might help him in gaining access to the empress: and he could not believe that, when she knew Mary lived, and her father was no more, she could refuse alike the pleadings of humanity and justice. Or, if she feared that mature life might awaken somewhat of her father's ambition in the widow of her brother, on that point he might be silent, and the two orphan daughters of that unhappy pair who had perished beneath the rigours of Siberia, the son of a man who had been the favourite of her father, whom he had served most faithfully, should be alone presented to her merciful consideration.

"I will depart," said Brakenthal to himself, "so soon as the snow is hard enough to bear me, and so soon as I have strength for the journey;" and he thenceforward sought the aid of Mary in preparing nourishing food, and every day, by regular exercise, sought to regain those powers which he had possessed in an eminent degree when he first appeared among them. Mary guessed his motives, and, to her utmost, seconded his endeavours, though her heart sunk within her at the thoughts of parting, and she dared not mention her suspicions of his intention to Alexander, lest the improving state of his spirits should receive a shock he was unequal to sustain. They therefore fell into their former

habits as much as possible, finding the reward of their daily toil in the wise counsels and entertaining conversation of their venerated friend, sometimes diversified by a book, and not unfrequently by Mary's inquiries on the roads, the people, and, in fact, the possibility of flight, to which her brother always turned a deaf ear. At length he desired her never to awaken such ideas in his mind, or nourish them in her own; for so much had the possibility of such an enterprise alarmed their father, that he had exacted from him a solemn promise never to attempt it.

This sufficed for the submissive daughter, and she never again even hinted at the possibility of escape, well remembering her father's words to her mother on the outset of their journey to Siberia, also his consistent and self-denying conduct at the feast of the Boyar; but as she could not by possibility forget the horrors of the past winter, or conceive the possibility of enduring such another, bereft of her father and friend, so she looked the more earnestly to all she trusted that friend might do in their behalf; and now, in the absence of her brother, began to speak freely to him on the plans passing in his mind, and inform him who were the persons she recollects as most likely to forward his benevolent plans, either from natural goodness of disposition or gratitude to the memory of her father—for how many owed to him their all!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE snow again became hard, the air clear and wholesome. Peter again went out to inquire after the sick and the aged, taking such helps as Mary had the power to send, and relating to all the death of his old master, and the promise of his children to him, held to be as dear as honourable. Every day Alexander found full employment, and wandered far and wide to seek the game that might repay his toil, often encountering danger that excited his spirits; for the prowling wolf, the cunning hyena, and the fierce lynx crossed his steps, and sought the same timid animals with himself, but never scared him from his purpose. He was habitually, as well as constitutionally, courageous; but his father's frequent tales of the fields of slaughter in which he had been engaged made an impression on his mind, nurtured probably in those lonely wanderings, for he now resolved never to be a slayer of men, and he kept his promise to himself.

One morning, as Mary was adjusting his belt, and furnishing his pouch with the dried meat and homely cake he was wont to take for refreshment, and praising the good looks he had lately obtained, Brukenthal observed, "You also ought to go out, dear Mary, and visit those who have done their utmost in showing attention to you: poor Aishey is near her confinement; she was the first person who entered your dwelling and helped you in your trouble. Pray visit her, and take her a little of the Boyar's good brandy; it will be valuable to her now, and the sight of you not less so."

"Do go, dear Mary," said Alexander. "I will walk with you half a verst, and, should you feel weary, I will return with you; but I am certain the air will revive you."

Mary lingered as the nervous and timid linger: "perhaps Catherine might want her, or the good man could not manage the dinner;" other fears she had none; the hand of violence would not cross her path, nor the tongue of ribaldry

wound her ear; and the lithe limbs, accustomed to daily labour, would doubtless bear her much farther than the village, if necessary; besides, she loved Aishey, and could take her two beautiful lambskins for her expected babe.

Soon was Mary herself so wrapped in the coverings of the country, that she resembled some unwieldy and formless animal: a deep hood of skins was drawn over her face, snow shoes on her feet, skin gloves, with the wool inward, on her hands, and a visor with glass eyes on her face. She looked around, and once more thought that, despite the cold veil of universal white, the face of nature was still beautiful. The sun rode high in the heavens, which were now blue as she had seen them from the gardens of Oranienbaum, as she remarked to Alexander, who tripped gayly by her side until he perceived a bird of prey hovering to the left, whom he called a poacher on his quarry, marking a victim whom he must see after, and turned away.

"But you will yourself kill the poor thing," said Mary, reproachfully.

"Yes, put it out of life and out of pain in a single moment, thereby saving it from being borne up on high by yonder tyrant, and torn alive limb from limb, to feed her eager brood. Believe me, Mary, I am as merciful as I can be. I rarely miss my prey, for my eye is practised, my hand steady; but, if I am so unfortunate, I spend hours in searching for my wounded victim, that I may end his miseries; I abhor cruelty of all things. When I am a Czar, Mary (which, thank God, I never shall be!), depend upon it, I shall send no exiles to Siberia, do what I may be sides."

Alexander turned away suddenly, and, though he had assumed somewhat of a gay tone, it was evident that the iron of captivity rankled in his soul; nor could Mary look after him as he sprang away in his vile garments, and mark his manly beauty without a bitter sigh; but she tried to rally her spirits, and began to sing Luther's hymn, as Brukenthal had taught it to her. Her voice, sweet, full, and harmonious, floated far and wide on the clear air, but it awoke no answering response, or charmed one aching heart; a stillness "that might be felt," like the darkness of the Egyptians, sat on all things, and, despite of the cheering sun, spread a tender melancholy over the mind which would not be removed.

Between her own dwelling and that cluster of huts dignified by the name of a village, where even the home of its humble ruler was far inferior to the cottage, there was one small building hitherto uninhabited and dilapidated, which she might not have noticed but from recollecting that her father had said, "if Peter had not been taken in by them, he meant to have lived in that poor shed." she looked at it, and suddenly ceased to sing; the wretched cabin must surely have got an inmate, for the broken door was closed, a smoke was issuing from a hole in the roof, and the aperture which served for a window had been filled up, according to the custom of the country, by a block of ice, but so imperfectly that the cold must penetrate. Mary shuddered as she passed: "How much better is poor Peter lodged with us," said she, "compared to such a shed! Well might he praise the cottage. Thank God, we have made that faithful creature happy, save in that he has shared our troubles! And how thankful ought we to be that we are not consigned to such a miserable dwelling as that! in comparison, we have a comfortable, convenient house, sheltered by the outward buildings and the fir-wood. We are even wealthy:

who could it be that sent the cows and the sheep, giving us riches in the day of poverty, and health in the time of sickness?—night and morn will I remember him in my prayers, to the latest hour of my existence."

Thus soliloquizing, Mary reached the village, and, after paying her respects first at the house of her keeper, where she was kindly welcomed, gladdened the eyes of Aishey, who had become a mother the previous day, and exhibited her newborn treasure with that proud delight which nature renders her recompense, and gladly did she swathe it in the soft snow-white skins brought by the empress. Meantime, the cottage was crowded with the inhabitants of the village—the young, that they loved to gaze on her fair open brow, and listen to her kindly words; the old, that they might benefit by her advice, as being skilled in medicine. All offered her food, though many had only a scanty portion for themselves, and all besought blessings on her head, but many revived her sorrow by inquiries after him they styled "the holy Prince Menzikoff" which others blessed with more native delicacy and sensibility repressed. After giving her most important gifts to Aishey, and lesser ones to those who most needed them, and finding she had stayed a full hour, which was as long as prudence warranted at this season, she set out homeward, followed by thanks and prayers, children running after her to the utmost bounds of their poor settlement.

Every human being is soothed by the sympathy or revived by the love of its fellow-creatures, however humble their condition or uncouth their expression; and Mary hastened homeward, sensible that her walk had been beneficial to her; her mind was invigorated, her step quickened. She had left those to whom she was dear, and she was about to meet those who were inexpressibly dear to her.

As she approached the hut of which we have spoken, she began to look out for her brother, as he had promised to meet her, unless prevented by something particular; but, far as the view extended over the white plain which spread around her, he was not within ken. She concluded that his sport had drawn him farther than he had intended, but this only induced her to observe with more accuracy the marks by which she must pursue her route to the cottage.

At the moment she passed the hut, a voice called out to her "to stop," in a thick guttural tone, which seemed to combine entreaty and threat. She looked, and saw the head of a man thrust from the hole in the low roof, covered with a bonnet like her own, and he now addressed her in piteous accents, which with her were always irresistible.

"Stop a moment, I beseech you. I came hither from Berenzof last night, a banished man, in great misery, and very ill. A serf was appointed to wait on me, and we were placed in this dungeon together, but he has deserted me. I am left without food or fire, and a cruel disorder racks my limbs and leaves me helpless, so that I have not strength to open the door and crawl to the village."

"Neither have I," said Mary, approaching it.

"Go back to the village, I beseech you, and procure help; I will give you money, for I have secreted a little; approach nearer, and I will."

"I want no money. I will send you help; take comfort," said Mary, looking earnestly towards the speaker; but who shall describe her astonishment, the mingled horror and compas-

sion that smote upon her bosom, when she distinctly saw that the man who addressed her was Ivan Dolgourouki!

Yes! this forlorn exile, this banished and deserted sufferer, was the arch enemy whose cruel intrigues had slaughtered her parents, ruined every branch of the family, done that which he never could undo; his own utter helplessness was a guarantee for the continuance of theirs. She trembled excessively, and her heart beat so violently, she feared lest she should sink on the ground; but, rousing herself by a violent effort, she began to run as fast as she was able towards the cottage.

The man cried out after her in very agony, to entreat her return to the village, where alone he could look for help; and her hearing now seconded her sight—the voice was Ivan Dolgourouki's. Ah! how different a man from that near relative of his, who still held over her memory and her affection an influence never to be erased, or even diminished! How rapidly did a thousand tender reminiscences swell at her bosom! the wretched exile, her father's sufferings and death, her own disgrace, her brother's situation, all seemed for a moment cast into oblivion by the vivid recollection of Theodore, awakened from seeing Ivan.

She was yet at some distance from home when Alexander met her, and would have drawn her arm under his own had he not perceived that she was alarmed by something, and he eagerly inquired the cause.

"A new exile is arrived at that dilapidated shed; he has neither food nor fire; the serf has deserted him, and left him to perish of the same disease which so dreadfully afflicted our friend."

"Good God! what complicated misery! but I will fly to him this moment with Peter, who is bringing home my game; you will nurse him, dear Mary, and the good Brukenthal will—"

"Hold, Alexander! I must tell you who this man is before you proceed farther, since personally you know him not. It is Ivan Dolgourouki, the man who so lately governed Russia, and was the implacable enemy of us all."

Alexander started as if a terrible serpent had risen in his path, and reared its head before him; he recoiled a few paces, and stood silent and fixed as a statue.

"I promised him help," said Mary, "for his state is terrible; nevertheless, we had better see Mr. Brukenthal first, perhaps."

"Nó, no, dear Mary," said the young man, for kindly feelings resumed their sway, and deep sighs burst from his bosom as the emptiness of all earthly grandeur struck on his mind; "we have no time to lose; the sufferings of our fellow-creature claim commiseration, and we need no new lesson: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,' would be the language of Brukenthal, for it was that of his divine master."

So saying, he sprang to meet Peter, and laying the game on the ground, led the way to the hut. Mary, loading herself with the spoil, proceeded to the cottage, her heart more burdened than her person. However sincere in her desire to relieve the sick man, and thankful that she had arrived at the time of his extreme distress, she felt a shrinking, and almost superstitious dread, of him; a new cloud seemed to have fallen on her path, already darkened with so many evils.

When this strange and terrible story was related to Brukenthal, the first emotions he felt were anger with himself for persuading Mary to

go out, and thereby bring such an evil upon herself and family, which was succeeded by some degree of vexation with her, for having commissioned her brother to bring him thither. "Peter could have taken him food and skins, and procured firing from the village; it was right to help him—in fact, a positive duty, but not to place him in the very chair of Menzikoff, his victim. Well it is that he has departed before his faith and patience were put to so severe a trial in the person of his bitterest enemy."

"My father would have removed him hither, because he knew the place, which you do not, my dear friend; none of our animals have so cold a dwelling, and he is suffering from a rheumatic fever, like that in which you experienced such great torments."

"In that case," said Brukenthal, "I must pity him; so, if you will clear that corner, I will fetch the tresses down, and we will make him a bed that will give the full advantage of the stove; it will not do to turn him over to Peter's management in the first place, though I believe it was most beneficial to me, taken at the proper period in my fever. I will watch its progress, and do my best for him, but I confess it will be very difficult so to act, with the memory of Menzikoff full in my mind, and his children before my eyes. There is a something in my heart which says continually, 'leave him to retributive justice,' he has earned his fate."

"But you have often told us, dear sir, that, although certain crimes called for legal punishments in this world, and certain imprudences (like that of my poor father when he set out with so proud a train) are likely to produce punishments, yet we are not authorized in considering the common misfortunes of nature as the recompence of crime. Ivan deserved banishment, I really believe, but not the horrible destitution and painful disease under which he suffers; *you*, the noblest, kindest of human beings, the only *man*,* perhaps, who ever came voluntarily hither, endured the same affliction."

"True, my child, natural causes produce natural effects. I was wrong, Mary, and have perhaps, in other things, indulged aversion to this man beyond what justice demands; the sweetness of your temper reprobates the indignation I have permitted to mine. Yet it is not in human nature to look upon you in this place, and clothed in that garb, and forgive him."

Mary had never witnessed such emotions as he now laboured under affect her venerable friend before, so holy, calm, and self-subdued had he always been; nor could she bear that he should reproach himself for allowing them to agitate him, seeing it was for the sake of his friend's family alone he felt them.

For a considerable time they remained silent, Mary becoming uneasy, as she thought Alexander ought to have returned some time ago, and, as she was in the act of listening, she heard his voice within a short distance calling her name. On mentioning this, Brukenthal darted from the house, earnestly entreating her to remain within, as his aid would be sufficient.

It appeared that, on reaching the hut and forcing the door, the wretched exile was found fallen on the floor, from which he had not the power to rise; his limbs being apparently benumbed by the cold, and his frame shaken, as in the very agonies of death. Laying him as well

as they were able on a wretched mattress, which was the only furniture in the hut, and putting upon him what they could take from their own persons, Alexander and the serf set out to carry him; but his total helplessness rendered Alexander unequal to his share of the burden, and long had they found the journey too much when they began to shout for assistance from the cottage, fearing to leave him for a moment, lest death should ensue.

Mary followed with lights, which had now become necessary, and their task was soon completed; the stranger was laid in the warm corner, his limbs chafed, cordials held to his lips, and dropped slowly into his mouth, and words of comfort offered to his confused and wondering ears by Brukenthal, who, with all the zeal of pure compassion, was now awake to every means of resuscitation and assistance. A sense of warmth stole over the wretched man indicative of returning life, but with it came excruciating pains and partial delirium, in which he bitterly reproached the present empress for placing him on the rack, denouncing the banished nobleman who had been, a few years before, held to be her heart's choice, and in other respects showing so much of what was likely to have given offence at court, that all of his hearers who paid attention to his words might account for his banishment as a consequence of his opinions.

To Brukenthal this *exposé* was painful, because, in the first instance, he had concluded that punishment to their enemy would be release to them; but he now thought Menzikoff and his children were alike forgotten; that new people and new interests occupied every avenue of the royal mind, and obliterated all which had been done or suffered by the strongest intellect and most active powers ever engaged for a country which required the highest possible efforts for her liberation from barbarity.

The good man did not the less earnestly seek the welfare of his patient; and, finding his fever ran extremely high, he desired Mary to prepare a blister to be laid on his chest, and an opiate which might deaden his sense of pain. On applying the former, he found a small, flat parcel, carefully sewed in leather, tied round the neck by a riband, which, on removing, he gave to Mary, saying, "Place it in safety, as he may hereafter wish for it. I think it is paper, but whether treason or love-letters, it is nothing to us; he has a purse, too, in his girdle, which will hurt him; put them both into a safe place till he can use them."

Mary did as she was requested, and devoted herself to Alexander, who was weary and hungry; but these evils, being temporary, did not long prevent him from exulting in the sense of having saved the life of a fellow-creature, even though he had been to him and all he loved a ruthless, wily, persevering enemy. He felt assured that he had acted as his father would have done had he been alive, thereby giving proof of the great change religion had wrought in his own heart, and which he had communicated to his children.

When Peter also had fed abundantly, and professed himself no worse for an exertion which, to his hard and sinewy form, was no extraordinary effort, Brukenthal knelt down to family worship, and prayed with a sincere and softened heart for the sufferer before them, on whose exhausted frame the opiate had already taken effect. He was then committed to the charge of the serf, who was naturally a humane man (but,

* Sentence of banishment in the law courts liberates a woman from her criminal partner in Russia, but she may accompany him by petition, and generally does—such is the love of a wife.

of course, ignorant of all that related to his charge), with a strict injunction to rouse the minister if he were worse, or awoke with any proofs of returning reason. They all retired under the painful belief that a new trouble had come upon them, and one which might draw much greater in its train, since, if the government should take umbrage at their conduct, increased punishment must be the consequence. Nevertheless, though all retired to press a sleepless pillow for many hours, full of conjectures and fears for the future, and driven to contemplate the sorrows of the past, not one could repent the transaction in which they had been engaged, for each might say, "Surely my judgment is with the Lord, my reward is with my God."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE family were awakened in the morning at an early hour by a summons which roused Peter himself, who had not been disturbed by the stranger. The governor of the village had not been at home when the new exile arrived, under the care of two soldiers, who were anxious to return the same night to Berenzof; and, having given up their charge, together with a letter from his superior at his cottage, returned forthwith. One of the serfs of their keeper (Master Paul) therefore took upon himself to place the exile in the hut we have mentioned; and, at the earnest request of the banished man, engaged another to attend him, upon whom Count Ivan had vented all the anger he felt due to his miserable lodging, and the fretfulness natural to the disease with which he had been seized the day before, and which had rendered travelling a punishment more acute than the severest sentence could have contemplated. As the equality of condition rendered such language unknown in his native wilds, and the universality of poverty showed nothing very extraordinary in passing a night in poor lodgings, the man returned in dudgeon to his own home and the comforts of his own stove, willing to forfeit his expected wages rather than bear the temper of one he deemed an "insolent criminal," far inferior to an honest man like himself, and, in fact, ignorant of all which was most calculated to obtain compassion for one in the situation of the exile. Ivan Dolgourouki had consequently been left, as we have seen, to experience every possible evil belonging to the country, when sickness rendered him absolutely incapable of sustaining any.

Master Paul had returned the preceding evening, and, on reading his letter, which cautioned him against allowing his captive any indulgence for at least some months, or providing him with any assistance so long as his own money lasted, yet showed him at once the necessity of providing him with a more efficient lodging than that to which his representative had appointed him. Taking a pine-branch torch in his hand, he lost no time in proceeding to the hut whence the prisoner had been taken two hours before, and, finding it empty, sought the other dwellings, and severely remonstrated with the man who had forsaken him; but, in the course of his examinations, hearing that Mary had visited them, which was confirmed by his wife on his return, he went to bed contentedly, not doubting but

she had found in the prisoner a friend, for whose safety she had provided.

As, however, it was his duty to ascertain the fact, as soon as he awoke he proceeded to the cottage, and there learned, not only the security of the captive, but those circumstances which exceedingly surprised him, and induced him to determine on removing the exile as soon as possible; for he saw clearly that, however kindly all were disposed towards a work of Christian charity, every hour must recall to their memory those injuries they might be willing, but were unable to forget; and such had been his own full esteem and veneration for Menzikoff, together with that of his people, that they felt as if his dwelling was polluted by the presence of his enemy.

On this point Brukenthal, with considerate kindness, begged the keeper not to speak; for, as Count Ivan had made one enemy on his first arrival, should his past conduct be known, he would doubtless make more, and be subject to annoyances he could not guard against, but might not merit. "I will not tell of him," said the guardian, bluntly, "because, if I did, not one among them would let him sleep under their roof, and I should be forced to take him myself, or make him a stove in the hut he has left; depend upon it, I will do neither if I can help it."

The subject of their consultations awoke in great pain, and was evidently much too ill for removal, especially as snow was again falling, and the cold such as a stranger would consider intense. His senses were evidently wandering, but his features, which the preceding day were swollen and livid, had resumed much of their general appearance; and, as Mary glanced towards him, she could trace traits of resemblance to his cousin Theodore which could never be erased from her memory, and could not fail to be an hourly trial to her spirits. Her reason, therefore, seconded the wishes of Brukenthal and the visitant for his removal when it could be accomplished safely, yet, by a strange perversity, her eye continually sought to catch the lineaments of a face which offered the only record of Theodore's on which she could ever hope to gaze. Conscious this was a weakness she ought to combat, she hastened to her morning's occupations, and left to Alexander the rights of hospitality, and to their friend the consolations of medicine and encouragement.

It was by slow degrees that returning reason dawned on the mind of the bewildered and severely-afflicted man, but in the course of the day he became sensible of the comforts of warmth, the applications which procured partial ease, and of the kindness with which his wants were supplied. In a day or two more, indistinct recollections of his sudden sentence of banishment, his long, melancholy journey were present to his mind, followed by utter destitution, the flight of his menial, the pangs of a reproaching conscience; a hell within, aided by fierce pains without. He must have fallen, then, into a state of utter insensibility, in which he had been conveyed hither by charitable people. "Could they be a religious brotherhood? The elder of the house resembled a monk, and prayer or praise was heard occasionally from all, and none but fanatics could be thankful for existence in such a country as this."

"No; this conclusion was wrong; for a lovely child brought him warm milk, and told

him she robbed her pet calf to do him good, and a young woman moved about in sheepskin garments, but with light and graceful motion. He remembered, in agony of heart, crying to a woman who fled from him; this must have been the same, the very person who had sent the rescue she could not give, yet she evidently avoided him whom she had so laid under obligation. They all showed him benevolent attention, yet not one expressed curiosity as to his past or present situation, and conversed with each other rather by signs than words, as if checked by his presence. They were evidently not the boors of the country; if they were exiles, they must have been long resident before they could possibly have acquired the cattle they were possessed of: who could they be?"

When Brukenthal saw the proper time, he caused Peter to practise upon the stranger in the same way he had formerly operated on himself, after which he removed him up stairs; and his recovery became complete, though his weakness exceeded what his own had been, and his appetite became inordinate. Referring to the great kindness he experienced, and the preceding want he had sustained, he one day asked for his purse, saying "there was only a small sum in it, but what there was he begged of Brukenthal to accept."

The purse and the packet were handed to him, the contents of the former being declined, with an assurance that he would require all it contained before the governor paid him any allowance, especially as he would have a mattress and sheepskins to purchase when he removed into his own lodgings.

"Oh! do not, do not remove me! you have saved my life—preserve it."

"The governor will not suffer you to remain here, as you must be aware, since he comes so frequently to see if you can be removed with safety. The young people to whom this place belongs are willing to relieve your necessities, and they compassionate your sufferings, since they feel for all; but when you are better, they must rejoice in your removal, since they are much inconvenienced by your presence. There can be no pleasure in society where minds do not coalesce; and the artless, kind, and honest offer no proper companionship to Count Ivan Dolgourouki."

"So you know my name; of course, Master Paul revealed it. He might also have told you the state from which I have fallen, and then you would have pitied my misfortunes as much as the complaint from which you have relieved me."

"Others have fallen from a state as high as yours, and with far more innocence."

"For Heaven's sake, tell me where I am! My brain again swims; strange thoughts are again floating before me. Who saw me, and saved me? I conjure you to tell me."

"The daughter of Prince Mensikoff saw you and knew you. His son brought you hither; his friend addresses you."

"But where, oh where is Mensikoff himself?"

"He is gone to the true penitent believer's happiest home, for there 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary rest,' that home where assuredly the murderer who slew him by cold and hunger, degradation and solicitude—by the broken heart which wept over his wife's

grave and his children's misery, will be called to a terrible account."

Dolgourouki groaned bitterly, and turned his face to the wall, but in a short time started up, exclaiming, in great agitation,

"Father, you have not enumerated all his miseries, though each is as a burning coal fixed in the centre of my heart. His fair and blameless daughter, the virtuous, beautiful young empress, died here, and is buried with that excellent mother whom all Cronstadt deem a saint."

"Not so; her sister Ulrica, a lovely girl of the same height, died here of the smallpox, which the little girl and her brother suffered from at the same time. A change in the dress of those fair sisters, and the more violent grief manifested by Ulrica (to whom sorrow was new), caused the mistake, which, of course, they could never rectify; you, however, cannot forget that Mary caught the smallpox from her husband, and had it in Russia."

"She lives! she lives! Banished, bereaved of rank, parents, friends, and fortune, still she lives! Oh, God! how inscrutable are thy ways!"

"Rather exclaim, 'Oh, man, how crushing and cruel are thine!' heaping on thy brother worm pain and sorrow, want and misery, as if the natural evils of existence were not enough, and as if thou wert not thyself the heir of disease and grief, the possible prey of mortification, poverty, and death."

When this conversation took place, both were seated near the stove, as Count Ivan was now able to descend to the midday meal; Alexander was helping Peter; Mary now entered, bending beneath the vessel she bore, which having set down, she filled a cup with warm milk, and put it into the hands of Catherine to carry to him.

Dolgourouki gazed earnestly upon the fair face which had often flitted past him, but never approached him since the first moment when she had recognised him, but was herself in a mask, and saw that the peasant, whom he had beheld as one remembered in his dreams, was indeed the fair young empress, the beautiful and gentle Mary, the pride of the Russian court—she who had never made a single enemy, though comprised in the destruction of her ambitious but meritorious father. Yes, there she stood, labouring as a serf, and clothed as one, whom he had seen so often beaming with jewels, and habited in costly velvets and royal ermine, on whose steps princes waited with pride, and the finest ladies of Europe surrounded with honour. It was indeed the same—the adored of Prince Theodore Dolgourouki, who was preparing food for her household, and smiling on the efforts of little Catherine to assist her.

Ivan arose pale and trembling from his seat; a thousand memories were swelling at his heart, a thousand words were struggling for utterance at his lips, but shame, sorrow, pride, and bitter regret combined to overwhelm him; he staggered forward a few paces, and, throwing himself at Mary's feet, burst into a paroxysm of hysterical tears, being able only to articulate "Forgive! forgive!"

"I have forgiven—I trust God will enable me fully to forgive—Count Ivan."

Mary spoke with a mild dignity calculated to restore his composure, but his agitation increased as he conquered the suffocating sensation which impeded speech, and he cried out vehemently,

"Forgive me, my empress—forgive me, daughter of the injured Menzikoff, for that I bring you news of Theodore—the murdered Theodore. He lives, but lives only to lament the death of his long-loved lamented Mary."

"Lives! Theodore lives!" said Mary, and dropped on the floor as cold, as pale, and lifeless as the snow around her dwelling.

Brukenthal, terrified by an effect he had never witnessed before, gathered her in his arms, and was proceeding to carry her into the air, when the screams of Catherine brought Alexander to his assistance. Though much alarmed at seeing his sister in such a state, he proceeded instantly to obtain those restoratives which his poor mother had so often required, and in a short time had the satisfaction of seeing life return to her blue lips, and her eyes slowly reopen.

When she had come sufficiently to herself to recollect the cause of her swoon, she cast her eyes around in quest of Ivan, who, shocked with the mischief his violence had perpetrated, was withdrawn. Not seeing him, she said to Brukenthal, who was supporting her, "Father, was it a dream?"

"No, my child; you heard that Theodore, your own, long-mourned Theodore, is yet alive, or was so lately; but I fear the joy is so abbreviated by the distance at which you are placed from each other, the little probability you should ever meet, and the circumstances likely to arise from his belief of your death, that I dare not congratulate you."

"I dare—I must! It cannot be that the wickedness of man would add to her sufferings by deception," said the brother, tenderly kissing her cheek.

Tears, salutary tears, coursed each other down the face of Mary, who, as soon as she was able, retired to her own chamber, followed by the frightened child, to whom all was incomprehensible. Indeed, Mary was as yet unable to analyze her own feelings. Joy, overwhelming, intolerable joy, which crushed out life in its first surprise, was now mingled with fears, and hopes, and anxieties, awakened by the alarmed and cautious old man, which, by tempering the violence of her sensations, and dividing the action of the mind, happily preserved her reason, which had else sunk beneath the lightning stroke thus flashed upon her brain in its unmitigated brightness.

Alexander, with all the tenderness of a sister, stood beside her couch, wiped her flowing tears, and spoke, as sanguine youth loves to speak, in the language of ardent hope and generous courage. The moment, however, when he thought he could leave her to the care of the fond infant, he descended, eager to inquire on what foundation Ivan Dolgourouki had ventured to assert the existence of that excellent relative, on whom so many tears had been shed by every member of his own family, and for whose sake (even in the belief of his death) Mary had refused the generous Alexovitch, whom he loved more than anything on earth save her beloved self.

The very first inquiry he made seemed likely to involve the history on which so much depended in oblivion, for the answer of Ivan evoked a shriek of anger and horror from the two anxious auditors, who drew their seats on either side of him (who now held his late kind

protectors and masters in abeyance), and thus began his narrative of by-gone events:

"At the time when the assassins hired by Prince Menzikoff to destroy me—"

"Wretch!" cried Alexander, "my father was a brave man, utterly incapable of the baseness of murder, even when most irritated by anger, or misled by ambition."

"He never injured your cousin, even in thought," cried Brukenthal; "though, unhappily, having arranged the marriage of his daughter with the empress, he declined giving her to one whose virtues he honoured."

At length the question was heard, "By whose orders was Theodore Dolgourouki seized and stabbed when found in the gardens of Oranienbaum?"

To this Brukenthal could distinctly answer, "that, within a short time of his death, he had written an account of that unhappy transaction from the lips of Menzikoff, who had given references to the actual perpetrators of the injury;" adding, "previous to this account, which I will proceed to read to you, and the truth of which could be immediately ascertained by persons resident at Petersburgh, I confess I had always entertained suspicions of Count Ivan Dolgourouki, who was the next heir of the unfortunate Theodore, the favourite of his father, and, from what I myself knew of his conduct, capable of doing a bold, cunning, and unscrupulous action when it led to his own advancement."

"Me injure Theodore! impossible! You cannot think it, and say so only to wound my feelings by false accusations: you trample on the fallen, and—"

"Hold!" cried Alexander, "or you may drive us to reprisals, which hitherto we have certainly showed little desire to make. Remember, you set out by accusing my father—my dear, honoured, and slowly-murdered father, of a crime to which his whole soul was abhorrent, but which, I grant, a prejudiced person might deem possible, the circumstances considered. My venerable friend's suspicion he never hinted before, or I should have told him that I had heard my sister say, 'your conduct to Theodore was noble,' since, on his father's desiring to disinherit him, you refused to accept the patrimony never justly forfeited by one you held inexpressibly dear. With this unhappy idea in your mind, probably your very love for him caused your hatred and persecution of us. All our misfortunes may have arisen from misconception: was it so, Count Ivan?"

Ivan Dolgourouki did not reply, but he turned, with an air of mingled pride and embarrassment from the eyes of Brukenthal, which were fixed upon him with a scrutinizing expression.

"Only say this was your motive for persecuting us, and you will remove half its guilt. My heart is as open to offer you friendship as it has been to yield you compassion."

There was no answer, and the open countenance of the generous youth became again dark with indignant anger, when Brukenthal interposed with a calm voice, yet with parental authority: he now said,

"Do not press your adversary with questions he cannot answer: the silence of Count Ivan is the only negative his feelings and situation allow him to give, and it is honourable to him, although no other answer could have availed him. If you, dear Alexander, were not in such

agitation, your own recollection of dates and circumstances would show you that the enmity which destroyed your house must be in full operation before the news of his cousin's injury could have reached the family of the Dolgourouki. Though your father was silent on a subject which caused him so much uneasiness, yet he was always inquiring, through every possible medium, whether any news of an extraordinary nature had reached Prince Bazilch Dolgourouki or the Mareschal—”

Brukenthal was interrupted, and all startled, by the appearance of Mary, who had sprang into the midst with a face as pale and a step as noiseless as those attributed to a spectre. She had waited the return of Alexander with news of Theodore until her patience was exhausted, and her extreme fear was excited (as high words were evidently passing below) that Ivan would not reveal that which he knew, or had deceived her by his first assertion, and was now receiving reproaches on that account. Eagerly pressing forward, she spoke with trembling eagerness to him on whom she seemed to depend for life or reason.

“Count Ivan, did Theodore survive being rolled up, as I *saw*, and being thrown into the sea, as I *heard*?”

“He survived, notwithstanding he was stabbed in the side by those assassins you saw. They did not throw him into the sea; he plunged into it himself, and was received by his friend when apparently expiring; that friend preserved him, but with extreme difficulty, for they encountered severe weather in the seas of Finland, and were compelled to remain some weeks in an obscure island to refit. A Danish vessel touching at the place, they engaged her to convey them to Dantzic, knowing the extreme distress the family of Kreuss must be then experiencing, and the equal loss Theodore experienced for want of medical assistance. A short time after they got out to sea, and at a time when they were experiencing all the evils arising from an ill-provisioned and every way wretched craft, they fell in with an English privateer, and, the two countries being now at war, on signal being given, the sloop could do nothing better than surrender. Their apparent misfortune was valuable to all, but to Theodore it was positive earthly salvation.”

“But what became of him? where did they take him?”

“To England; for, although an opportunity occurred, of which the English captain availed himself, to land the Germans, he was too ill for removal in so hasty and comfortless a manner as they thankfully embraced, and, as he was under the care of a skilful surgeon, it would have been madness to have quitted. There was also a young midshipman on board, of noble family, who had become exceedingly attached, and waited on him with a woman's tenderness; therefore Kreuss, who, of course, could not leave his sister, was easy as to his accommodation, though he lamented the distance to which he must inevitably be removed. His own journey was long and disastrous, for his sister was seized with fever on the road, the consequence of the misfortunes which had attended their ill-fated journey and severe disappointment. When at length they reached their home near Leipsic, they learned that, many weeks before, the daughter of Prince Menzikoff, whom they

had considered as the affianced bride of Theodore, was become the wife of the emperor.”

A transient blush spread over the pallid countenance of Mary, but it soon fled; the pang inflicted did not prove what was intended probably in the first instance, yet soon repented, as Ivan quickly added, “The Germans know not, of course, how absolute is the power of a father in Russia; but let that pass: enough to say that my uncle's first information of his son's existence was by a courier from Germany, whose letter conveyed the particulars you already know, and which letter he sent to me; since then—”

“But when—when did you receive this letter, Count Ivan? tell me the truth, I beseech you.”

“Just as you entered on your journey to Siberia.”

“Not before?”

“Certainly not *before*, for with the impression I then received the *mine* would have been the destination of both your father and brother; probably such sentence might have followed, had not your conductors brought back the sad story of your mother's death; our next news conveyed to us the account of your own. The Czar had been much affected by the first, for he loved your mother from his cradle, and when he heard of your death he became inconsolable, and his long fluctuating disorder from that day became evidently fatal. What I suffered from his reproaches and threatenings no tongue can relate, yet he could not bear me out of his sight a moment. As I had been a necessity to him when he loved me, so was I when he hated me, and demanded, with incessant sorrow or angry imprecations, 'the friends of his childhood, who had once fondly loved him—the tender wife, who alone could nurse him—his playfellow Alexander, to whom he intended to marry his sister Elizabeth.' Day and night he thus raved in helpless imbecility, continually calling for the living and for the dead; but, as neither could by possibility be present during the short span of existence which remained, I caused him to be informed that you were all swept away. Though I did not know this, I certainly believed it to be the case, since the latest information received spoke of disease, distress, incurable sorrow, and a climate alike destructive to life in an early or late stage of existence.”

“The very information should have prevented your conclusion,” said Brukenthal, “since there was only one infant in the family, and my friend could not be deemed aged.”

“True; but my object was the attainment of peace to the emperor, though it might be the peace of despair; and safety to myself, although that safety might be (as it proved) temporary. The end was not gained, for he continued to inveigh and lament with so much bitterness, that my reign was considered over by all within the palace many days before his death. The consequence was an entire loss of the Dolgourouki influence, which would have placed the crown on the head of the true heir, the Duke of Holstein; and the Princess Anne, of Courland, to the astonishment of the empire and of Europe, has gained possession of the throne—ay, and she will keep it, too; she has energy, talent, and beauty, and more of her great uncle's character about her than any of his own

descendants save the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Catherine."*

"I loved them both," said Mary, with a deep sigh, "and they once loved me."

"That they undoubtedly did, for many a tear have they both shed for your banishment and death, to my own knowledge; nor can I doubt that the enmity of the empress, as shown towards myself, in a great measure arises from the share I had in Prince Menzikoff's banishment; added to that may be the love—yes, let me say the love!—I entertained, and may still entertain, for the Princess Elizabeth. In Siberia, one may surely speak truth without flinching, and Alexander is not my rival now, whatever he might have been."

"You may say that safely, Count Ivan. I know nothing of love or ambition either, save that of getting to be a better shot than my good neighbour Alexovitch."

"Love is no matter of jest," resumed Ivan, "when it interferes with the conduct of empires, as Russia will soon know to her cost. Biron, the beloved of the empress, is recalled and advanced; his ambition knows no bounds; he will plunge the country into difficulties, you will see, from which Romanzoff, Woronzow, Sapicha, and others, will vainly try to rescue her. I left the marechal at the point of death, my uncle Bazilitch weak and retired, Theodore a wanderer, and Ivan an exile: so are the Dolgourouki situate—who will supply their places? who oppose the prejudicial influence that—"

"Be not unhappy, count; there are many yet left to Russia sufficient for her safety; see that the new minister does wrong before you pronounce against him, and, above all, discriminate between the patriotism which fears for your country, and the lamentation which mourns for yourself," said Brukenthal.

"What are courts and ministers to us in the desert?" said Mary, mournfully turning away. "I want only to know about Theodore; it must suffice me to know he lives, and lives far distant, yet you *can* tell if any second letter has arrived."

"You have held in your hand, lady, a whole packet of Theodore's letters; one of them arrived just as I was setting out, and has been not half read by me, since I was obliged to take them from my pocket-book, and get them secured in the manner you have seen, knowing that I should be deprived of that by the officer who brought me hither."

"You will allow my sister to see letters so interesting to her, Count Ivan?"

"Not voluntarily, or at *your* request, Alexander Menzikoff, for you have insulted me. 'Tis true I am at your mercy; two men may overpower one who is reduced as I am; murder hides robbery, and the snows of Siberia have covered such crimes frequently."

"Give your arm to Mary, my dear Alexander; she is again very faint, and certainly unequal to bearing any farther shock, whether from momentary penitence, which repents without amendment, or petulance quick to resent its own injuries, without allowing for the far greater it has inflicted. It would ill become us to scan a sick man's words too closely, or, under any provocation, forget the sacred character of a guest. Good-night, my children. I will

stretch myself by the stove to-night; the blessing of God be on all beneath this roof!"

The anger which had reddened the brow and quivered on the lip of Alexander subsided as his hand shook that of him under whose parental sway he felt passion controlled, and reason resume her empire. He well knew that Brukenthal would compromise no point of honour on his behalf, and had held aloof from Dolgourouki hitherto in a way to which his own young and yielding generosity of nature was unequal, for that very day he had suggested the idea of persuading the governor to allow him to remain with them, to which Brukenthal had objected, as utterly incompatible with either happiness or propriety as regarded the empress.

Another reason was now evident, the power Ivan possessed of wounding their feelings, awaking anger it would be difficult to repress, and sinful to indulge. "No, no," said the youth to himself, "I must give him up—yet how happy might I have been in such a companion! He is well informed, has seen various countries, is polished in mind and manners, must necessarily sympathize in our afflictions and privations, is always at hand to receive kindness, and communicate the blessings of society; on how many points can we meet, and be rendered mutually beneficial! but the good father is right—there is still a gulf between us. In days past, he has been a remorseless and continued enemy; and how far is he at this time less? could anything short of a monster refuse the slightest wish of Mary, much less one on which her happiness evidently depends. The same man who, while she waited on Peter II. with a tenderness and devotedness even the gentle Catherine could not equal to his matchless grandsire, could calmly contrive, and resolutely effect her ruin, now refuses her the single gratification it is possible he can bestow, or she experience, although from her kindness in the hour of extremity he received life and ease—received it, too, when she was fully aware of his identity, beheld in him the serpent who had stung her to the heart, destroyed the mother she idolized, the sister she loved, the father to whom her heart clung with all the fond tenacity of a last, *last* refuge.

"He has denied her—the wretch may, in his wickedness, render this denial eternal by destroying the letters; in which case, no after information he could give would ever be relied on by me, for a heart so cruel must be necessarily deceitful. But shall I, from any sense of false delicacy, deprive Mary of the only real good it may ever be in my power to bestow? Did I not receive her from my father as a precious deposit, for whom my every effort was to be exerted; for whom I was bound to labour, and incited to love; whose counsels I was exhorted to follow—true! Must I, then, not consult her? Whatever may be her temptation, she will not tell me to do wrong."

Alexander crept softly into Mary's room, and found her, as he had expected, awake, for her mind was harassed by a thousand feelings, from which she had been hitherto exempt; hope, fear, solicitude, indefinable expectations, and unwarrantable conclusions, were perpetually passing her mind, and occasioning a sense of distress far more tormenting than the calm melancholy which had so long reigned in a kind of tranquil grief and subdued emotion over her bosom. She was thankful for the company of

* This princess succeeded the Empress Anne, who died early.

her brother, though grieved that her sorrows were so afflictive to him, and she eagerly listened to the occasion of his visit—the power of obtaining for her those letters she so earnestly yearned to read, and which caprice, revenge, or the natural feelings of a heart known to be cruel and unscrupulous might destroy in a moment.

"That the eye of our good Brukenthal is on him now I doubt not, but in the morning a thousand opportunities will arise that may enable him to burn them."

"Oh, no!" said Mary, "he loves Theodore; he brought these memorials with him as society in the wilderness; he may deny them to me, but he will the more fondly treasure them for himself. As to obtaining them otherwise than as his own free gift, it is impossible. I would not stain the mind of my brother by the ranking memory of a dishonourable action; no, not for even a sight of Theodore—at least, I trust not. Go to your mistress, my beloved Alexander, and sleep, as you hitherto have done, soundly and guiltlessly. It is a satisfaction to know that my heart's chosen was not the victim of his love; that he still lives, and may in time, perhaps, be happy, though I must never witness his felicity. Yes, it is a happiness for which I am truly thankful."

Thankful, doubtless, Mary was, but yet she was unhappy; and, when Alexander had retired, she vainly courted sleep to visit her pillow. A new scene was opened, which offered, in the first place, much to delight the eye of imagination, and awakened hope in the heart, still clinging with fond tenacity to its object; but yet there seemed not one point on which it could rest for comfort, or exercise fortitude; and, however she might cling to it, she could not fail to be sensible that she had been infinitely better without it.

At their usual hour of assembling on the morrow, Mary did not appear, and the circle, usually cheered by her presence, looked dull and comfortless; but there were no sullen looks, nor want of accustomed attention to the wants of their sick guest, who made inquiries of Catherine as to the health of her sister, she being soon the only person in the cottage with Ivan, Brukenthal undertaking Mary's usual duties.

"Sister is asleep now; but she has been crying, for I saw the tears upon her cheek. I wonder what made her cry!—was it you, Count Ivan, that was so cruel, so naughty, as to grieve dear sister Mary, who made you that warm tipet, and gives you the first cups of milk every day?"

"I will grieve her no more, my pretty Catherine; take this parcel to her, and this penknife, that she may open it carefully; tell her I send it, but the contents are for her eyes *alone*; she will return them only (at a distant time) to myself."

"I will tell her everything, and I will take her the best lamp, that she may read her lesson better. I suppose the inside is full of lessons, count?"

Ivan Dolgourouki, though his heart felt the lighter for having made this sacrifice to his pride, shook his head mournfully as he exclaimed, "Lessons! yes, my pretty Catherine, it is indeed full of lessons, which thine own innocent heart may one day learn to con too well; but God forbid thou shouldst receive them in the desert!"

Mary, awakened by the kiss of Catherine, and the bright light carried in her hand, was soon aroused; and, though her head ached, and her trembling fingers with difficulty performed their office, it was not long before she disclosed five letters, or rather packages, in the handwriting of Theodore Dolgourouki. They appeared to her as messages from the land of spirits, and eagerly as she pressed them alternately to her lips and her heart, she yet felt as if they were something awful and sacred, belonging to a state of existence from which she was eternally divided. Seeing the surprise evinced in the looks of the child recalled her to herself, and, sending her down with a thankful assurance to Count Ivan that she would obey his wishes, she lifted up her heart to Heaven, beseeching strength to endure whatever might befall her; and then, having noted that the letters were numbered, began to enter on that which was evidently a most agitating though welcome task.

Theodore to Ivan Dolgourouki.

London, January, 1728.

My dear cousin,

You have heard, ere this, from my father, the grievous misadventure which befell me last autumn in the Gulf of Cronstadt, and which has reduced me so much, that even now I can scarcely consider myself a living man. It is on this very account that I will not lose an opportunity offered by the French ambassador to convey a letter to you, dear Ivan, because there is no knowing whether I shall be able to write another; and there are many things I can say to you which it is evident I cannot say to my father, though I trust he is no longer offended with me for declining those paths of ambition which have so little benefited himself, but which, I apprehend, you are at this time pursuing with ardour.

May they make you happy! you have talents for them which I am deficient in; and, *mal-à-propos* as my fate has hitherto been, notwithstanding you may say, however little ambition has done for one cousin, love has done still less for the other, believe me, Ivan, even now I do not repent devoting myself as I have done to the gentler passion. It has demanded no other sacrifice than happiness and life; religion, integrity, all that renders life a blessing and happiness a possibility, are untouched.

In a short time, as travelling will in Russia be rendered easy, it is probable the court will be going to Moscow, and you will see my father (it is not, indeed, improbable that you are now with him); in this case, I beseech you to guard him from adopting a belief to which his prejudices against Menzikoff may subject him, viz., that the men who injured me were incited by him as personal enemies. I declare to you, most solemnly, Ivan, that my clear conviction is to the contrary. They accused me of being an enemy to the empress, and urged me to name my accomplices; this alone proves that treason, not love, was my supposed crime. I was suspected of concealment for the purpose of killing the empress, who, you know (good as she is), has more than once been in danger. From their words, I found they had been commanded to watch the gardens; and my own observations, indeed, my own *entrée*, proved that it was not without reason. Their determination to drag me to our terrible new prisons on

the Neva, acting on a mind already in the highest state of agitation from bitter disappointment and almost phrensic love, rendered me impetuous to very madness, and I greatly fear I gave a death-blow to one of my enthrallers ; it was natural for the other to avenge, as he did by the wound which he gave remorselessly, considering me, in a twofold sense, the offender. All was the work of a few minutes ; and, but for the rapid movements, as well as the unparalleled after-care of my dear Kreuss, I should not be telling the story. All which now remains is for you to make inquiry, dear Ivan, as to any such accident having happened to one of the poor fishermen ; and, should I have been so unfortunate as to have killed the man, take his family under your immediate protection.

A few words will suffice to tell me this—let your letter, I beseech you, by all the love we have borne each other, notwithstanding the extraordinary separation we have experienced from our boyish days, be filled with memorials of my own Mary. Forget that she is the daughter of Menzikoff. Dismiss from your mind the supposition that he has refused her to a Dolgorouki, since I can most truly assure you that I never asked him for her, being bound by a promise made to her excellent mother not to do so until she permitted me. In short, remember only that I am an unfortunate lover, confined to a sick room at an immeasurable distance from my heart's idol, who is surrounded by adorers, and under the absolute control of a father whose ambition will unquestionably induce him to bestow her on him who can bid the highest for a prize all must deem inestimable.

I see you smile, Ivan, with somewhat of a curling lip, and grieve that the Theodore of whom in your kindness you think so highly, should have become so infatuated ; and that neither time, distance, nor the loss of nearly life itself should have cured him of a passion whose issue hope itself scarcely encourages. Well ! grant it is folly, still it is my all of life and of life's enjoyment ; my reason clings to it not less than my inclination, for it has confirmed whatever was good in my intentions, and strengthened whatever was wavering in my resolutions. If I had not devoted myself to Mary in the manner I did from my first acquaintance, I might have been drawn into the vortex of ambition, and all the base intrigues, the unholy aspirations which belong to it, and which I had taught my very soul to eschew while pursuing the history of more enlightened countries and more patriotic spirits than I can hope to mingle with. Or the taste I have imbibed for music and painting might have rendered me the votary of meretricious pleasure, and the song of the siren lulled me into that repose which is the death of every manly virtue.

Love did not do this—it increased my philanthropy, awakened me to the wants of my country and fellow-men. Go to Pozeck, Ivan, and see what great things I accomplished in so short a time ; learn from that how much more might be done in the neighbourhood of Moscow ; or rather, come hither, Ivan, and see what may be done by a nobility living among the people, diffusing wealth and knowledge, which is itself wealth to as wide a circle as their means and influence extend, until the whole land is one vast garden, everywhere bearing on its surface the means of life to the poor, and offering in its

vast manufactories, its well-explored mines, and its commanding navy, riches, elegances, and luxuries for the enjoyment of both its grandes and artisans, of which you can form no idea ; for, though you have travelled on the Continent, you could find nothing, save in some few Swiss chalets, that could be brought into comparison with an English farmer's mansion, or the small snug house furnished in every part of their manufacturer's streets in the trading towns. The higher and better paid of these workmen earn a sum equal to the produce of small estates ; and were it not for the circumstance of food and rent being expensive in towns, could rival the lords of the soil in the appearance of their families. True, many of them labour too hard, and shorten the natural term of existence, in order that their wives may dress above their station, or their children receive as good an education as those who are their superiors ; but still the very error is combined with general improvement in the human character. The man who loves, and therefore indulges his wife at the expense of extra labour, whether of the toiling hand or the thinking brain, is a man : the serf who beats and starves his wife, because she is as much his slave as he is the slave of his lord, is a despicable animal, inferior to the brutes over whom he tyrannizes, since his intelligence is far too insignificant to atone for his barbarity.

In saying this, think not I am condemning our serfs as below the general standard of human beings. No, Ivan ! on my life, I think more highly of them, taken altogether, than any part of the community among whom they are placed. I love them for their gayety and good-humour, their endurance of a thousand ills and provocations which one human being ought never to receive from another, and more than all for domestic tenderness, and, in many instances, refinement of affection, which the highborn and highbred among us too seldom exhibit ; for you and I well know that the most aristocratic stoop to conduct in our domestic lives which would disgrace our lowest slaves. Many Peters must make laws ; many Catherines, with softer ways of enforcing such laws, must follow, before Russia has ceased to be barbarian, even in the mansions where luxury and splendour have shone as proudly as in the palaces of the Medici in Italy, or in Versailles at the present moment.

But, while writing of others, I am forgetting to relate my own adventures, which your friendship and pity make you anxious to know, and which I had not strength to detail to my father ; for, although I am still but a shadow, I am comparatively strong to what I was when I penned that letter, necessarily so long delayed, and which served little more than to tell him he had yet a son—a son whose heart he would not stoop to read, even where love for himself was the burden of its very pulsation.

From the great loss of blood experienced, most probably, in consequence of my plunging into the sea and swimming towards the boat, I had become so weak as to be scarcely able to speak, and the slightest exertion appearing to threaten immediate dissolution. I was tended by Kreuss and his sweet sister, with all the watchful tenderness due to a newborn infant, my mind in a great degree partaking the weakness of my body after its first terrible ebullition had subsided, a circumstance which unquestionably preserved my life.

Having no other surgeon than my poor friend, my wound made little progress until the time when we were placed in the English frigate, when I was immediately attended to by a very clever man, from whose care I soon derived so much benefit that Kreuss, for the first time, began to think I would survive. When, however, the opportunity of landing with his sister, who had suffered severely from the many hardships inflicted on her in this unfortunate voyage, presented itself, the excellent young man was distracted between opposing duties; and, notwithstanding the great kindness shown to us all by the English captain and his people, seemed incapable of leaving me in the hands of strangers, yet fully sensible he could not procure for me equally eligible accommodations until a long journey by land had been traversed, which the surgeon declared I was utterly unable to bear.

"Turn your friend over to me, baron," said a young man, whom I had often noticed as looking pitifully towards me, because I was told by the captain he was the bravest of his crew, and he had struck me as the best looking; "turn him over to me, and I'll nurse him like a pet lamb all the way to Old England, and then put him in tow with my mother and sisters—my name an't Harry Herbert if I don't."

"'Tis an honourable name in your own land, and very ancient. I think I may trust you," said Kreuss.

"You may trust a British sailor," said the youth, proudly, "whether he has a name or not; but you Germans are all for pedigree; so perhaps my saying I am the third son of the Earl of Partinscale may render you more easy."

Kreuss eagerly mentioned my family and titles—Prince, General, &c.

"Yes, yes, all very right; he is a fine fellow, suffering from a cause to which every brave man is subject—that's enough for me: I take him as Prince Helpless, General of Lint and Gallipots. If I and mine make him into an English fox-hunter, will it not be his best title?"

Kreuss humoured the kind youth's fancy, and left me with more reliance on the future than he had dared to indulge; and from that time has young Herbert been, in fact, my devoted servant at every hour save when his duties compelled his absence. He even engaged the attendance of the same surgeon for a month after my arrival, and conveyed me from the port where we landed, by water, to within two versts of his father's residence, where I have been treated with the kindness and consideration a son alone could claim, and by slow degrees am regaining strength, though the season is against me.

The ambassador from our court has visited me and supplied my wants, which must have been positively distressing save for Herbert's generosity, since poor Kreuss was compelled to use my purse, neither of us having been prepared for the many evils which arose to us. He will have written to my father more fully than I was able; and you will, I trust, have heard, many weeks ago, that I was still living, and therefore, dear Ivan, still loving.

In fact, as I gain strength, so do I find myself recovering powers of memory and mind, which have been suspended, and every day brings with it a portion of recovered sorrow and deep solicitude, to say nothing of the disappointment arising from the blighting of all my plans,

and the finding myself thrown at such a distance from her who is my pole-star of attraction, and towards whom I have as yet no power to travel. To the kindness of Lady Partinscale and her niece I am indebted for so much improvement of my English (which, you may remember, I studied in Pozeck), that I can now join in conversation freely, which is, of course, a great relief to me, besides rendering me orally acquainted with the laws and government of this singular country. The great changes which have taken place within the last century have always excited my curiosity, and I cannot fail to learn from the best sources what were the moving springs which wrought that unprecedented fact—the condemnation of a king to the block, in his own country, by his own subjects; the banishment of another king, and the placing a foreigner on the throne. These strange events, and the circumstances arising out of them, will form the subject of my next long letter, dear Ivan, and must be interesting to you, who have devoted yourself to the cares of state and the government of your fellow-subjects. Here everybody talks about politics as if they understood them, which, in nine cases out of ten, I apprehend they do not; but as it is certain they have an interest in them, and can every week see an *exposé* of the acts of government, which is actually published in the capital, circulated by degrees through the provinces, and may be purchased for a trifle, no wonder free-men give their opinion freely, and comment on the promulgation of a new law with the same scrutinizing tone they would use if a plough or any other machine were under investigation. Great truths are elicited by humble means; and, although these censurers may be often wrong, and are almost always fatiguing, I doubt not many important facts, the foundation of invaluable edicts, might be derived from a close attention to their observations.

You will say, as you have often said, "that I am still thinking of the people who are but the property of their masters," instead of the high and puissant who claim them, and who ought to find in one of themselves a partisan and historian. I grant it; but here, as every man is in so far noble that the laws protect him, and in many cases educate him, he may be said to merit attention almost as much as those who can compel it. I would you were with me, Ivan; you would soon see enough to put all your prejudices to the rout, and yet the lower order of Englishmen by no means exhibit themselves to advantage with strangers. Neither their good qualities nor their happiness are seen on the surface; but, unquestionably, the former exist and the latter is felt; for what else could have rendered the people of an island, little favoured by nature, so great in all the highest attributes of the word as they certainly are? They are rivalled, too, by the Dutch, who have only a strip of land won from the sea; yet whose navies visit every shore, whose colonies are planted wherever wealth can be won, and who secured their liberty by courage and perseverance unequalled in the annals of human warfare.

When I write next I will tell you much of England, as I trust I shall have visited its court (for I saw the monarch when I was in Germany, in his father's electorate of Hanover, and remember being much pleased with his wife,

the Princess Caroline), and one has a little curiosity to see how a man carries himself in a situation full of difficulty, and in a court so highly refined as the present, who had little to distinguish him beyond the courage inherent in his family. Write me, I beseech you, quickly and fully, and despatch your letter by a courier whom I can attach to my person, and with whom you can intrust a considerable sum. Nevertheless, so soon as I am able to travel, I will return, for every hour increases my solicitude; and, whatever may be the event of my attachment, I earnestly desire to be on the spot, not only for my own, but the far dearer sake of my beloved Mary, of whose tender and ever-enduring attachment I have no more doubt than of my own. I am also anxious, to the greatest degree, as to the health of the princess her mother, whom I love and honour as if she were my own, and from whom I now clearly see it would have been wicked and cruel to divide her daughter. Of them and their concerns, in so far as you can learn, inform me fully, dear Ivan. I wish you could also tell me that you were as fondly attached to some fair girl as myself; for then, and then only, could you write as much at random, as foolishly, ingenuously, and sincerely, as your truly affectionate

THEODORE.

Letter No. 2, affixed to the foregoing.

Ivan, dear Ivan, I am positively bewildered! mad!

I have undoubtedly received my deathblow, and I ought to be thankful that such is my destination, for what have I to do with the world since Mary is given to another!

Did I not tell you I would come soon to Russia; that I would personally watch over my invaluable property—the heart of an angel given to me in the first hour when she knew she had a heart, save for the ties of consanguinity? Was not the first blush on her cheek, the first gentle throbbing of a bosom pure as Heaven ever sent on earth, and in its own nature noble as pure, given to me? to me alone, when the brightest eyes, the proudest names of Russia, nay, of all Europe, were bent upon her; and the sons of monarchs vailed to the father they despised, that they might gain favour for the daughter they adored?

I will try to be calm; I will tell you why I am thus agitated, alarmed, distressed—*distressed!* there is not one word in the vast vocabulary of human expression, in the wide circuit of human existence and human suffering, which can offer to your mind any idea of my feelings, my perturbation, my agony; but mark me, Ivan, and remember it to all eternity, even now, in the transport of passion, I say not one word, one echo of a word, which can by possibility throw blame on Mary.

But I will be calm; I will tell you what I have heard; if you can contradict it, raise heaven and earth to do so—fool that I am! it is official: the ambassador, who sent for my papers to you, has given me the information by way of amassing me; all the devils in hell could not have invented a better medium for tormenting me, and this Frenchman talks of amusing—of the—oh! I am mad!

He says “Prince Menzikoff has attained the last step on the ladder of ambition; he has married his daughter, the Princess Mary (mind that,

Mary! had it not been Mary, he might have given a dozen daughters for me) to the declared heir of the crown. She is very beautiful, he adds, but reduced by a severe illness to such a state of weakness as to excite pity rather than envy when she appeared in public with her consort, who is only twelve years old, and in delicate health. The empress also appeared, but was evidently ill, and my despatches were occasioned by her death.”

Compelling myself to transcribe these words has shown me that beyond a doubt they are true; that Mary should suffer severely when I was torn from her, and most probably murdered by drowning, is perfectly in course; and that her father, so soon as she was capable, should compel her to marry, by urging the value such a connexion must be to her family, perfectly in character; indeed, what can any Russian maiden do in such a case? Do they not all obey, and, with few exceptions, all suffer? Are not one-half of our female nobility (lovely and accomplished as they are) repining slaves, and the other half—alas! are they not all alike victims? The mother of Mary was one of the few among us who felt the value of a union with the man she loved, and therefore desired it for her daughter; yet was she an unhappy wife, forsaken for ambition, which has now completed its triumph by immolating the child she had imbued with every virtue and every grace. Doubtless the princess lives, or respect for her memory would have delayed these accursed nuptials, which have probably been hurried forward, in order that they might precede the death of the empress. There are, therefore, two women sacrificed—two matchless women, to this man’s lust of power; but I will not curse him—no, he is Mary’s father! and who among the Dolgourouki (save Theodore) would not have done the same?

Fulfil the wishes I have expressed in my letter, I beseech you, for I am fearfully shaken, and the promise of returning health seems utterly annihilated; send me, therefore, a countryman or two to watch over me, receive my latest orders, and take back my curse to Russia. Attempt not to visit me, dear Ivan, I conjure you, but bestow every kind office of which you are capable on that fair flower who has need of every one’s assistance in the thorny path where pride has placed her. You were wont to be a favourite with the forward boy to whom she is consigned as a toy; he may torture, though he cannot comprehend. Oh! Mary, is it thus thy beauty, gentleness, intelligence, and virtue are bestowed? are the warmth and tenderness of thy young heart—thy winning simplicity—thy noble confidence—thy poetic imaginings—the charm and novelty of thy ideas—thy natural eloquence—thy sweet voice, whose very whisper thrills the heart while it captivates the senses—are these meet gifts for a sickly child, the son of a weak and wayward father, as foolish as unfortunate? Fool that I am, would I give her to one that had power to estimate her justly? to woo and win the heart that is still my own? Oh! no, no, no!

Ivan, I must not return to Russia now—alas! I must never return. Should I continue to live (which at some moments appears impossible, and at others too probable), I must waste existence as a self-banished exile, for I dare not trust myself to cast one look on the wife of my sovereign. No, sweet Mary, never shall one

new agony be awakened in that virtuous breast by him who would die to preserve thy peace, who must die a thousand deaths every hour of his existence in recalling thy last looks of tearful love ; thy holy, yet imperfect resolutions to abide near a dying mother, thy full and innocent reliance on myself—ah ! why, why was thy very virtue made thy ruin ? ten minutes earlier hadst thou yielded to my entreaties, we had been on that wide waste of waters which would have put a barrier between us and all with power to hurt us : onward, yes, onward would I have led thee, precious dove, even to the deserts of Columbia ; I would have fed thee with my own hands, clothed thee by my own labour, built for thee a bower—

This is raving : I know it, Ivan. Could I have protected her from the winds and waves, the dangers and hardships which bowed the fair frame of Amelia Kreuss to the earth like a broken flower ! Unhappy that I am, on how many have I inflicted suffering ! but she is now well ; she is soothed by the cares of wedded love. Kreuss too, generous, devoted, noble-hearted friend, he will be happy soon ! I alone am the blighted branch, condemned to wither in wretched loneliness, and die unmourned and unrepresented—to perish as a vapour that is exhaled and forgotten : I, in whose heart life rushes with as warm and benevolent a tide as human nature ever furnished ; loving as fervently the sports of early childhood as the enterprise of manhood, and having discarded ambition in order to live on affection, which has been from my cradle a fountain perpetually gushing, as from the mother's nature within me ; neither tainted by pride nor chilled by experience, but full of glowing tenderness for the ties of home and of philanthropy for unnumbered dependants. Ivan, is this heart to become one block of ice, one mass of rock, steril, useless, unlovely, dangerous !—nay, God forbid !—may he preserve me from the sin which is frequently attached to suffering !

Forgive me that I thus throw before you the effusions of a broken spirit ; may you never know my troubles, Ivan, save as I show them : but I must say adieu ; my tears have already rendered the writing illegible.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

And fast, fast fell the tears of Mary as her dim eyes pursued this transcript of her Theodore's feelings, and her efforts to subdue the passion of grief which rose with recollection only rendered her sobs the more violent, and both Alexander and Brukenthal hastened to her assistance. The latter took from her hands the paper saturated by the tears which had mingled with those of Theodore, and found that her mental agitation had produced fever, and rendered her seriously unwell. When, therefore, her exhausted agony permitted speech, he entreated her to give the remainder of the letters into his charge, until she should be able to hear or read them, seeing farther effort to that purpose would render her too ill for any prescription on his part to be beneficial.

" You are right, Father Brukenthal, and I promise to rest from a task my eyes forbid me to continue ; but place them, I beseech you,

beneath my pillow, for Ivan gives them into my hands *only*, and I will not deceive him, though my sense of his past cruelty increases every moment."

" You think Theodore still lives, my daughter ? "

" How can I doubt it, knowing as I do how much of misery the young can live through, and Theodore is not twenty-six till the 4th of April. I have kept his birthday in my heart even here, as I also held the day of his death by fasting and prayer."

" My poor child ! my poor child !" exclaimed Brukenthal, as the tears gushed from his eyes, and he inwardly vowed to devote himself, with God's mercy, to the deliverance of a young creature who had suffered so long, so patiently, and, for the sake of others, even cheerfully, but in whose troubled countenance he now read that increase of sorrow which suspense and anxiety never fail to create. He dared not ask the question which hung upon his lips, " Is Theodore married ?" yet there had been something in the look and manner of Ivan which had awakened the belief that he either was so, or likely to be, and he had that morning declared again " that he had not read the half of Theodore's last letter, though it would doubtless mention the most material passage of his life." The good man felt extreme anxiety on this point ; for, as Mary had long been numbered with the dead, he thought it very possible that Theodore, blessed with returning health, and that restoration of spirits which the bereaved believe to be impossible, but the experienced daily witness, might have been led to make a second and even a happy choice. He earnestly desired to prepare her mind for such a circumstance before she read farther, but for the present administered a sleeping draught, and after a few words of prayer for resignation to the Divine will, left her to repose.

In the course of that day Ivan was removed by the village guardian, who had procured him a lodging, being accompanied by Alexander, who placed him on their only horse, which he led with great care ; for all remains of anger had vanished when he learned that Mary was in possession of the packet she desired, and on parting with Ivan he assured him " that it should soon be returned, and assuredly without any one casting an eye over the contents save his sister."

" She will not show them to you, I am certain ; you are too young, happily too clear of passion and its enthrallments, to be made the spectator of poor Theodore's weakness. Mary loves both you and Theodore too well to bring you together through such a medium. Love is not an acquaintance for the desert."

" Nevertheless, such an acquaintance may come uninvited."

" What can you mean, Alexander ? You cannot love—you are too happy."

" I love my sisters as well as ever man loved woman. I would go out the roughest day that ever blew in Siberia, with the wolves howling in my ears, and the hyena skulking on my trail, to get a bird for Mary when I see her appetite fail ; ay, or to find a warm fur to wrap round my little Catherine's throat : have I not broken ice when—"

" I grant all that, for your courage is equal to your father's, which was a property I always

allowed him ; but *your* love is as valuable in the desert, as that love I deprecated would be mischievous. You do not comprehend me."

" Yes I do, perfectly well ; and I answer, *marrying* *love* visits the desert at times, for the young Boyar Alexovitch loves Mary, and would gladly share his future sovereignty with her, for his father gives full consent, and he is rich and powerful. I grieve that she cannot love him in return, but I will never say so, lest it might give her pain, or in any way influence her ; within the cottage I never allow myself to mention his name."

" What is the brute like ? I mean, is he a Siberian bear or a blue fox ?"

" You mean to ask, is he ugly or handsome ; to which I reply, he is not only handsome, but elegant, yet he has not one spark of the fox in his composition ; the snows around us are not more free from guile and cunning than Alexovitch ; he is generous, and brave, and pious—why do you smile ?—he manages his horse like a Tatar or an Arab ; he throws the jereed as well as a Circassian ; indeed, his mother was one, and, like her, he is gentle and beautiful. You are yourself, count, of a fine height, and have something dignified about your head, and are fairer than him (but that goes for nothing in a man), but his eye is far brighter than yours ; to be sure it is unfair to compare you now you are so weak, and in sheepskins also. True, Alexovitch wears them too, but he covers them with a booshe worth a thousand crowns, and has a cap of skins and feathers such as I never saw in Petersburgh."

" And Mary can resist both the cap and the eyes beneath it ?"

" She is not a girl to value external advantages of any kind, even if her heart were disengaged, which it is not, as you are well aware. Nevertheless, I may be allowed to regret the circumstance, because the young Boyar would be a brother I could not only take into my very heart, but who is suited to my taste also. He has never been at court ; there are no crocodile tears or hyena whining in his composition ; his smile is as honest as the sunshine in June ; and he gives you a lift as freely as if his limbs grew for your use rather than his own. The poor adore him, for he stands between them and all evil, whether they want food for their families, or rent for his father ; and I have seen him leap a chasm that would fright you, to succour a lamb that was dropped from the claws of a soaring eagle."

" He is a fine fellow, undoubtedly : can I not make his acquaintance ?"

" That depends on Father Brukenthal's opinion."

" Not less on mine," said the keeper, who was walking at some distance, but now turned sharply towards them. " I prohibit all acquaintance during the term prescribed by the government, in which no indulgence is allowed to my prisoner, Count Ivan Dolgourouki. You are well aware that your humanity, Alexander Menzikoff, has effected a great encroachment on my orders already, and must be sensible that only by performing my duty more strictly can the prisoner himself escape a severer sentence. I don't like to remind you of the mines."

Both parties shuddered, and, after shaking hands, parted in silence, the younger not only pitying Ivan (who was still an invalid, and would,

he well knew, find nowhere the kind attentions, the cleanliness, or the plenty of his own cottage), but himself also for the loss of his society. " It is a pity he has been so wicked in his ambition, and especially in his cruelty to us, for he is a pleasant companion ; he has read much and seen much ; he has wit, and that playfulness which I have heard attributed to some of our visitants long since, but never witnessed before. One would spend the winter better if shut up with him than with dear Alexovitch, perhaps, for he knows nothing of either men or books—he looks even to me for knowledge."

On Alexander approaching his cottage, he saw a sledge at the door, and the very person he was thinking of in the act of entering, his father having preceded him. They came so soon as the weather allowed to make kind inquiries, bring various little presents, and learn if the road was practicable for Sabbath worship, which they found the case. It was a circumstance on which Brukenthal and the Boyar facilitated each other sincerely, but the knowledge of Mary's indisposition cast a shade on all.

" The light of your dwelling is darkened indeed without her," said the Boyar, " but methinks the Boyarina could resume it for you ; is it possible for her to take the place of Alexovitch, and return with me ? I would leave him as an hostage for our bringing her back in safety, and the young men could go out together in the day, and at eventide enjoy your society."

" Ah, my lord, you forget the dimensions of our cottage ; we have no serf save Peter, and he is always with the cattle."

" It will teach me the usages of a camp, father," said the young man, gayly, " and you, sir, will be to me not less a spiritual instructor than a commanding officer. I am certain my mother will cure the empress, and I should like to go out with Menzikoff better than anything on earth."

The eyes of Alexander had shone with delight as he heard the proposal, but his countenance soon became overcast, and he related to them what the guardian had said that morning, together with the circumstances of Ivan's late residence among them. The Boyar blamed them for warming " the frozen snake ;" but his own generous nature could not long resist the pleadings of the youth, nor the precepts of Christian charity, as delivered by Brukenthal ; but he agreed with the latter that no liberties must be taken at the present moment unsanctioned by the person in question, saying, " government has long arms, and eyes that see over the earth."

" If the eyes of our present empress had not been blinded by false report, her arms would not, could not, have been slow to save the family within these walls," said Brukenthal, " for on not one does the shadow of offence rest, though not one is free. I only can go, as I came, voluntarily, and, having no secrets with you, noble Boyar, or your son, whom I love, and whose welfare I seek, I profess to you an intention of setting out for Russia next week, for the express purpose of seeking the nobleman to whom Mary is attached, and whose existence we have ascertained through our late guest, in order that he may exert his powerful influence on the behalf of these oppressed ones."

" He is found ! he lives ! Remember, prince, I never thought him dead—I never allowed you

to hope that the empress would listen to another suitor."

" You did not, Father Brukenthal; but still—I thought—I hoped—"

The young men went out together, and Brukenthal told the Boyar that Ivan had confessed raising a report of the death of all the family; and although it was known that regular returns of the prisoners were sent back twice a year, there was a great probability that such returns might be those of criminals condemned by the judges only, as being returned when troops of those unhappy convicts were conveyed, and might, or might not, include the class condemned by the fiat of the sovereign. " At all events, I will go forth, and, at least, proclaim the truth to the Czarina. She is a woman, and must feel for her own sex; she has been the friend of Mary, and must know her innocence and her virtue."

At this moment Alexovitch hastily re-entered the cottage, and, having apparently shaken off the surprise and disappointment he had received by the admission of a new and fascinating object of desire, he immediately addressed his father in the most earnest manner:

" When can I go into the world, dear father, to so much advantage as now, when I can accompany so good a guardian as Mr. Brukenthal, to whom also I can, in return, be useful? You have always said that I should see the new city, and Count Woronzow has promised to take me by the hand whenever you should send me. When can I go better than now, in the beginning of a new reign, when the stir and bustle of armies and of pageants are afloat? You have never intended me to live and die amid the snow, unknowing and unknown; it was not thus you passed your own youth, father, and whom can I imitate better than you?"

It might be said, as the poet sung a few years later,

" Here ceased the youth, but still his speaking eye
Express'd the sacred wishes of his heart;"

for never did one more eloquent gaze into the glistening orbs of a proud but anxious parent. That Brukenthal, not only a pious priest, but a proved good friend and an old soldier, who, in withdrawing from the world, had not, therefore, forgotten its demands, or become incapable of its manners (seeing that he was not less courteous than manly), was invaluable as a guide, was indeed undeniable, and that such a one could ever again be hoped for in that desolate country was not less so. As it was also made much more clear to the Boyar that Mary would never marry his son than it had appeared before, he felt a desire to give that which he could bestow in lieu of that he could not; nor could he gaze on his son, in the beauty and strength of early manhood, and educated according to his own ideas of manly accomplishments beyond most of those with whom he had formerly mingled, without feeling that it was a duty he owed both to the world and the young man to enable them to meet. But to part with him, to trust one so well-disposed, so totally ignorant, in a world he had accustomed himself to consider even worse than it is, since few besides the bad emerged from it hither, rendered the trial an arduous one. The Boyar turned from the pleading looks of his son to scan the countenance of his revered friend.

Brukenthal understood the appeal; but so desirable was the scheme to himself, who naturally dreaded the long and awful task before him (more especially parting with the children of his heart), that he hesitated to answer, lest his own secret wishes should interfere with his honest opinion. Alexovitch mistook the cause of his hesitation, and said eagerly,

" Dear sir, I will be no trouble to you. I am quick and hasty, it is true, but I am not intractable; my mother will tell you that a thread will guide me—and I so reverence you!"

" I fear you not, my dear young friend, though you give yourself a bad character for one entering a world full of temptations. I trust you will well know in whose hands the thread lies that is to guide you."

" In yours—yours only; if you are willing to take me, I promise to abide your counsel in all things, and I am not a thing of pliabilities—no man shall make me forfeit my word. I may be led by love, but, I trust, not drawn by cunning."

" I trust you, Alexovitch, as I would trust Alexander, because I believe that you would act as those do who know the eye of God is upon them, and who, believing in his revealed word, from time to time seek in the blessed book for the instruction all human weakness requires. Were you a cold, conceited, self-dependant youth, I would not take you from the parental roof to launch you on the smiling but fickle sea of life—not, for the empire of all the Russias. But I repeat, I have no fear for you beyond that which should always accompany due solicitude; nevertheless, decide on nothing till you have conversed with your mother; she is a good and sensible woman—moreover, a Christian on conviction; honour and obey her, even as you obey your father."

Little as this doctrine might have been relished in Russia, it was eminently welcome to those who received it; for the Boyar, conscious, perhaps, that his marriage had been scarcely consistent with his profession at the time it took place, had long felt deference for the superior powers of his wife's mind, not less than entire love for her person, and he had for more than twenty years witnessed the beautiful consistency of her character as a Christian, ever since the period when she was baptized into that faith. He therefore readily agreed that the decision of this important question should depend on her, and be soon communicated to the family; but he did not depart without adding that, under any circumstances, the journey of Brukenthal should be assisted by every means in his power, and that, in order to secure secrecy, he would have him set off from his mansion, in which case he would have no need to pass through Berenzof, nor fall into the common route before reaching Nishnei Novogorod.

Alexovitch departed in high spirits, for he felt assured that his mother, tender and gentle as was her nature, and devoted as she had ever been to him, would not oppose his wishes; and, as he did not behold her who had captivated his youthful fancy, he was the better able to enjoy those dreams of the future which are, perhaps, the best realities of life.

Far different were the sensations of Alexander; he felt as if the very ground on which he stood were moved from beneath his feet: to lose at once the father he venerated, the friend he loved, was altogether beyond his strength to

sustain, especially when Mary was sick and languishing, unable to soothe and advise; and the one human being to whom he might reveal his feelings was the one from whom it was judged right to keep their movements secret. Ivan appeared to him at this time as an impersonation of the spirit of evil—subtle, insinuating, designing, and pleasing. How could he escape the temptations such a one might present, when he had neither the venerable wisdom of Brukenthal to warn him, nor the lively intercourse of Alexovitch to divert him? Might not Mary herself become charmed with their insinuating companion, when not another remained to whom she could commit her passing thoughts, or reveal her wishes? Could he maintain the guarded reserve, the constant prudence an intercourse with Ivan required in Brukenthal's opinion, when Brukenthal himself had ceased to assist him? Look as he would, the prospect before him was cheerless to very misery, and the prospect of good arising from the journey of his venerated friend far too distant to awaken hope, much less to foster confidence.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

So soon as Brukenthal thought Mary capable of hearing the change he meditated, he related all that had passed, declaring that he believed his own personal exertions could alone give them a chance for restoration to their country, and counteract the evil of Ivan Dolgourouki's false report as to their death.

The bare idea of losing the good man she loved so tenderly, and relied on so entirely, alarmed her exceedingly in the first instance; yet she sincerely desired that he should take the journey, and felt much consolation in the hope that Alexovitch would accompany him, as that included accommodation of every kind; and when she looked at the snow-white hair and the deep indentations which climate and sorrow had marked on his venerable countenance, it seemed utterly impossible to her to part with him under any other circumstances.

"You will seek Theodore wherever he may be found, Father Brukenthal: true, we have no money, but Alexander has many valuable skins, which are of light weight and easy conveyance; and I have diamonds, you know, of great value. If we are fated to die in the wilderness, it would be to me a consolation to know you were honoured and rich among your people, and blessed with the means of helping the poor of your flock."

"I will take only that jewel which was your dear mother's; your memory will not be the less faithful to her virtues for parting with that, and it cannot be difficult to dispose of it to supply my wants. That Prince Theodore Dolgourouki will rejoice in knowing you are living, and that he will use any interest he may have to assist me, I cannot doubt; but, from the fate of Ivan, I am led to suppose all his family are under ban, and greatly should I dread drawing him into difficulties."

"Go not near him; save him, father, whatever you do else; and yet even here his presence would make your poor Mary happy."

"You are mistaken, Mary; it would increase your sufferings tenfold, even if you were his wife, which, alas! perhaps, is now become im-

possible. You must summon courage to read the remainder of his letters, for they may reveal much that is necessary to be known: remember, he believes you dead."

A bright blush for a moment flushed the countenance of Mary, and as quickly receded; she felt indignant, but yet afraid; for surely the good father knew the character of his own sex better than she did, and he might have received from Ivan some intimation that awoke suspicion. Such terrible events had happened since the time of their parting, so slowly does time pass in the long, long winters of Siberia, that a life seemed to have gone over them both, and fully justified even the marriage of Theodore with another, in the judgment of Mary, though her heart refused to acknowledge it. After a considerable pause, she said,

"I will read my remaining letters; I will conquer my feelings better than before. If I should find that he is—that is, if it appears probable Theodore may at this time—"

"Be married, Mary?"

"Yes, should it be so, trouble yourself no farther, seeing there would be an additional reason for protecting him from jealousy as regards the government; and it would be better he should continue to believe me dead; besides, he is not in Russia, Father. Alas! all is still dark before me and around me; and the gleam of light communicated by Ivan has rendered all more gloomy."

"I go expressly to brighten it, and you must not allow yourself, after enduring so much so well, to sink even under a state of suspense, which is generally found more trying than actual sorrow. No, Mary; you must still struggle as a Christian woman, patiently but bravely; for poor Alexander will not only be left without any other comfort, but in some sort be exposed to temptation daily. You must guard him even here as if he were in the world, for we have a serpent in the wilderness."

"If you forbid him to associate with Ivan, he will obey you."

"Such obedience would be painful, and at length intolerable; I would not subject him to it, for he must have society, nor should it be denied to you. Ivan has great talents, and, at present, great suffering. I cannot forbid you to relieve one and to benefit by the other; but guard, I beseech you, the pure mind of your brother from the effects of his plausibility, his deceit, the proud wishes he may kindle in the heart of your brother; for, remember, amiable as he is, yet Alexander is the son of Menzikoff."

"Alas! to what could the most ambitious aspire in Siberia?"

"I am looking to the time of his return—looking also to the necessity of giving your heart and mind full employment, since even under the happiest auspices many wearisome months must pass before my mission can be effective. God forbid that your bosom should nourish hatred towards your enemy! but you must remember the deed which has prevented the Czarina's kindness in order to account for her delay."

"You have shown me my duty, dear Father Brukenthal, and I will try to perform it; but my heart is very heavy, and I am weak as a child. When you are gone, I wish to have a woman with me, but Aishey is married, and in every family they are beasts of burden: there is none to spare."

" I will instantly set out to find one, and if unsuccessful here, the good Boyar will help us from his village or his dwelling. Cheer up, my child; though I am past the age for trusting presentiments and listening to vain hopes, my heart whispers that all will finally succeed to our wishes."

The good man set out on his errand, and Mary rose and descended, to the joy of the poor child, who fondly danced around her, pointing out the many domestic offices in which she had assisted her brother or Peter, who were now engaged in the barn. Mary praised her, kissed her, and gave her a lesson to study in the manner Alexander had prepared it; and then, after looking up for strength to meet whatever of trial was before her, she placed herself by the little window (for it was now midday), and, with trembling resolution, drew forth the third letter of Theodore, though she rather desired to dwell again on those effusions of his love and sorrow which had overpowered, yet, in one sense, consoled her.

No. 3. *Theodore to Ivan Dolgourouki.*

Portsmouth, February, 1728.

I write, dear Ivan, to tell you I am on the point of leaving England for Lisbon, and entreat you to forward by letter, the servants, who are at this very time, I doubt not, on their road to me, by your directions. I have myself left full instructions that they may follow me; for, as you may suppose, I want the money they will bring, and still more the letters you will write me. I want also the face of a countryman, the sound of my native tongue; though I have the facility of a Russ in acquiring other languages, I do not the less yearn after my own.

This sensation is felt the stronger, because I do not think I shall ever have the courage to visit the land of my birth again, Ivan; but I will try to tell you what has become of me since I wrote you last, after receiving that terrible news, which has since been fully confirmed, and which, for a period, again threw me on a bed of sickness, from which I should, probably, not have arisen if I had not opened my heart, in all its bleeding misery, to my dear young friend Herbert, who was thus made a second time, to me, the medium of restoration, if that can be called so when a man returns to the world, like Samson, shorn of his locks, and henceforth consigned to an existence which is not life—a being that neither enjoys nor communicates the good which belongs to his age, his qualities, and his station.

Before, however, I had left my chamber, my young friend was summoned to his duty: for there the sons of the highest, when once engaged in the navy, of which you have heard so much (since it was the envy of our great emperor), are compelled to yield immediate obedience. I found, however, when I rejoined the family, that he had communicated the cause of my relapse to his parents; for, although not a word was uttered which could wound the most fastidious delicacy, the attentions of the countess were so truly maternal, and partook so much of that sympathizing tenderness peculiar to women, and the earl applied his mode of relief so expressly to what might be termed stirring up the man within me, that I neither doubted their knowledge of my condition, nor shrank from it;

and the lady soon became the confidante of my every feeling.

Agreeably to their advice, I rode frequently on horseback, accompanying a lovely girl, the orphan niece of Lady Partinscale, who was also an invalid, being afflicted with the disease, common in this country, which they term decline. So soon as I was able, the earl resolutely took me from what he termed the care of women, and introduced me at court, and to many of his most distinguished friends. I visited all public places of resort, and in the theatres actually forgot myself at times, and lived through the imaginary scene before me with the emotions I had once enjoyed. Nothing in their buildings pleased me so much as their churches, and with the ancient Abbey of Westminster I was absolutely entranced; also with the Hall in its neighbourhood, built by one of their first Norman kings. I was also introduced to their greatest living poets, Pope and Young, who have secured eternal fame in the very prime of life. Newton, their great philosopher, and who will probably be deemed, by posterity, the very greatest any country has produced, died just before it was my lot to visit England; and so did Addison, whom they account a writer of extraordinary elegance and pure morality. Swift I did see; he is a priest, but a severe satirist; a great dabbler in political affairs; unamiable as a man, and coarse as a companion, but a sincere patriot, being an Irishman, which, you know, means a different character from an Englishman, many from this country being found in our own army, and perhaps all others in Europe.

I found great interest in attending their Houses of Parliament, and was particularly struck with their bench of bishops, remembering what I heard in Germany respecting the firmness with which this class resisted a king who sought to change the religion of his country, and make himself as absolute as our Czars; there is something peculiarly striking in the firmness and grandeur of a mind which is accustomed to the profession of meekness. I believe those are all dead who were thus condemned to imprisonment, but I honoured their memory in their representatives. I was too late to see their great warrior Marlborough, but I was introduced to his widow, who is still a fine woman, in whose bold, bright eye may be read a more commanding spirit than a Russ would like in any but his empress.

Why did I write that word? I thought I had schooled myself so well, that in no possible guise should that fair vision rise before me; it is, perhaps, sin to name, and certainly sorrow to remember. However, it has arisen; and kings, priests, warriors, poets, orators, are all lost in confusion. I can write no more of the country, but I may tell you more of this family, for they are with me and around me; and their hospitality and friendship have bound me to them for life. Would that there was no other tie, no other tendril, clinging so gently, yet winding so closely round a withered stem!

I told you that the Earl of Partinscale had a large family; his eldest son is now on his travels, for every Englishman of fashion makes what is called the grand tour. The second is with his regiment; the third, as I have said, in the navy; but there are, besides, three sweet girls, pursuing their education, and two boys in the nursery. The niece, to whom the earl is guardian (Lady Amabel Seatown), lost both her pa-

rents so early that her affections own no other claim than these kind relatives; and, as the earl is not rich (being, like many others, a sufferer from the loyalty of his grandfather), a portion of his niece's wealth was left by her father in order to provide for her minority; notwithstanding, I understand her fortune is enormously augmented, and, of course, her hand sought by the highest in the land. She had not, however, been introduced at court when I arrived, but was soon after, when I was struck with her beauty, but, at the same time, with her extreme tenuity, and could not help comparing her form to that of Mary, much to the advantage of the latter. Soon afterward arrived that shock, which, while it recalled memories of both love and beauty to my mind with a vividness unknown before, yet divorced me from them, as it appeared, forever.

It seems (as I afterward learned) that, at the time when this young creature was presented to her sovereign, she caught a severe cold from exposure to the air, so that, when we again met, both were invalids, both recommended to the same diet, the same gentle exercise, when the sun permitted us to move, and the same quiet amusements within during those winter evenings when the earl was engaged with attendance in the Parliament, and the countess with those parties unavoidable to her station. I was aware that Amabel knew how I was situated, for she evidently pitied the sorrows of my heart as much or more than I grieved to see so fair a flower withering before my eyes, and too often reading in her situation the probable fate of my own drooping, perhaps dying Mary. Such emotions in her unhappily produced a tenderer sentiment, of which I could not fail to be sensible, because one young, ingenuous maiden's heart had been opened already to my view; and I hastened, therefore, to avert all evil from such a preference of a man whose heart was incapable of returning it, by feigning a desire to see more of the country; and, accordingly, I have visited the manufacturing towns, the seaports, and whatever this small but populous and most intelligent beehive of humanity presents, and should have remained absent till the arrival of your letters, at least, if I had not been recalled in the most urgent manner by the earl himself a week ago.

It appeared that Lady Amabel was much worse, and had been positively ordered by her physician to hasten to a warmer climate before the arrival of March, which, in this country, as in our own, is considered the most trying month in the year to delicate constitutions. The urgency of her case, the sense of her weakness, the knowledge of my unhappy freedom from actual ties, conspired to give an unnatural courage to the suffering girl, and in an agony, which greatly increased her symptoms, she confessed to her aunt the passion I had unhappily as unintentionally inspired, and declared "no power on earth should induce her to quit the country, unless accompanied by me."

In relating this, the earl candidly told me "that it had long been the hope, as it was the fondest wish of his heart, that his son should have been the chosen of his cousin," and, but for my arrival in their family, he could scarcely doubt such would have been the case, seeing she had in childhood showed a marked affection for him, which, both from person and disposi-

tion, he was calculated to improve. "However," added he, "that is all over now; a very few months will, I fear, decide the future fate of poor Amabel, and no consideration of a selfish nature shall interfere with the happiness it is possible she may attain by marrying the man she has so decidedly chosen."

I hesitated not a moment in assuring him that I never wished to marry; that I had secret but decided reasons for at least two years abstaining from any such engagement (you, Ivan, will guess what they must be who know the constitution of the Ozar); and I assured him that my late journey had been taken purely to rid his house of a dangerous, but not insidious visitant. For this he had already given me credit, and, after having had much conversation with his niece, whom he unquestionably loves with parental tenderness, he has at length induced me to accompany them all to Lisbon, my own remaining delicacy of health offering a sufficient reason for my visit to this favoured climate, and, at the same time, gratifying the delicacy of Amabel, and her earnest desire to secure my society.

To deny, and thereby to facilitate the progress of this fair and trusting creature's disease, is utterly impossible to one who has suffered himself, as I have done, from bitter disappointment in blighted love, yet I am well aware very distressing consequences may arise from my compliance. May God direct and guide me in this path through troubled waters! It is plain that, one way or other, sorrow is before me. I must either give pain or receive it; be it, then, my first great care not to merit it, either by a firmness cruel to others, or a pliability fatal to myself.

Surely, surely, Bazilitch or some one will follow me without loss of time, for my pecuniary obligations have become distressing from my journey and my sickness, and I need not tell you the sense of them destroys a man's independence to his own perception; however generous may be the hand that supplies him. Our own ambassador, and after him the earl, has lent me sums which, though considerable, are far below my income (which I learned in Germany to consider the proper boundary of my expenditure, a piece of knowledge seldom attained by the Russian nobility), but which I shall feel a burden till I can repay. This troubles me the more, because, to say the truth, during my journey I gave freely to the charities supported by public contribution, and the artisans who merited recompense for their talents and industry; and the earl being, though liberal, a prudent man, maintaining high rank with bounded income, may think me what I am not—nay, he may suspect me even of desiring that which I affected to fly from. Deliver me from this, dear Ivan, by sending an adequate sum direct to Lisbon.

I am summoned to the vessel: Amabel herself stands by my chair. Adieu, adieu! praise me for my forbearance, but write of her, *her only*; so will you be indeed the friend of your still anxious, bereaved, dispossessed

THEODORE.

When Mary had read this letter, and pressed her lips to "the one loved name" a thousand times, she felt that it would be far, *far* better she should know no more; but the thing was

impossible ; life and death were before her, and she rushed forward to ascertain the worst or the best, distantly as she was placed from the scene of action.

No. 4. *Theodore to Ivan Dolgourouki.*

Lisbon, March, 1728.

Dear Ivan,

We are safely arrived at this ancient city, and to me the voyage has been so beneficial, that I can once more truly say *I am well*, and with that health I experience some return of my usual spirits, and a kind of hope plays, like a lambent flame, on the leaden surface of my cold heart, as if to cheer what it is unequal to warm. I should, however, if my tenderest pity were not perpetually taxed for poor Amabel, be probably much better, for the novelty of all around would exceedingly amuse me, as the bravery and enterprise of this little kingdom has much that is captivating in history, and, so far as I have seen, the surface is full of beauty and magnificence. We are about to remove to Cintra, for which the dear invalid has a great desire, insisting that it will remove every vestige of her disorder, and there are certainly times when she looks so well, I am ready to believe her prognostications ; but the countess, and even the English physician who accompanied us hither, tell me that her hopes are a part of her disease, which at once deludes and destroys.

How strange a mystery is death ! it flies the wretch that sues for a conclusion to his sorrow, his poverty, or his toil, and refuses the criminal, whose removal would be a relief to his species, to fasten on the innocent and fair, the wealthy, the beloved, and the young ! Many of these favoured yet stricken ones are assembled here ; and last night we had a little party of both sexes, who met to celebrate the twenty-first birthday of Lady Amabel, whose presence at once charmed the heart and rent it. All were handsome, several highly accomplished ; the bloom of beauty sat on their youthful cheeks, a more than earthly radiance beamed from their eyes ; but their forms were fragile and stooping ; and in their laugh—for they were gay, and innocent, and sanguine—there was the hollow whisper of the tomb.

I have been most agreeably interrupted by a letter from Bazilitch, who has arrived in the Tagus, and, finding he must remain all night at Belem, forwarded by the hands of an English gentleman that which he considered of most consequence, the money I so long have needed, and which will make me perfectly comfortable on that score. Thank you for this care, dear Ivan ; but I would the honest fellow had sent me your letters ; probably you told him to give them only to my own hands, and men of his class are always literal in their interpretations. Be it my first care to see the earl, who himself received the package.

Ivan, I am overwhelmed with astonishment and dismay. Sir Henry Selwyn told Lord Partiscale that Prince Menzikoff was banished to Siberia, and my servant brought the news to England, having received it while lying off Cronstadt. He added, "in another week all Europe will ring with it, and execrate all who have been concerned in it."

And well may they thus condemn an award which nothing but treason on his part could jus-

tify ; and what treason can one suppose he could contrive, whose daughter shares the throne of his sovereign, that sovereign being a boy, whom his constant and loving guardianship has preserved during his sickly infancy ? It is evident that no change in the state of the crown could be beneficial to him, and the continuance might, seeing it gave him an opportunity of making another boy-marriage, by giving his son to one of Catherine's daughters, and we are certain he had sufficient ambition to aim at such a union, and thus become the ancestor of future sovereigns. He had far too good an understanding to desire the *name* of Czar for himself, seeing he has held the *power* ever since the death of Peter. I would not believe even himself, had he confessed it on the rack, and to the rack he would have been sentenced in such a case, we are all certain.

Menzikoff in Siberia is a blot on Russia, which all her snoxs will fail to cover. For Heaven's sake, Ivan, exert yourself to remove it ! call on all our friends, connexions, even serfs, to assist you. In having been our enemy, your desire for his recall will at once prove the generosity of your nature and the truth of your patriotism. The hatred you indulged in the day of his power must become pity in that of his misfortunes, and between the two you will learn to estimate and judge of him truly, to take his faults of pride and ambition along with his temptations, and place his merits beside his errors. Where is the man on whom fortune showered so much in the very heyday of youth, who would not have been spoiled by her indulgence, and therefore asked for more ; and how could he doubt his own capacity to rule mankind, and render grandeur the means of public benefit, who had been invested with it by the hand of the most extraordinary sovereign that ever swayed a sceptre ? It is a fine thing, Ivan, to be descended from a long line of princes, the ancient Boyars of the land, who owe the origin of their greatness to such remote antiquity, we know not how it came ; and it is natural that you and I, to whom nature has been not less liberal than fortune, should be proud of our high position. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that God confers, as with his own finger, a greatness infinitely superior to the claims of blood, or wealth, or beauty ; on some men he bestows genius, his own title-deeds for immortal fame.

Peter had himself this gift, and the intuitive knowledge it bestowed enabled him to discover it in the untaught *pie-boy*, who, when the page of learning was once opened to his eager eyes, grasped its stores by the devotion of a student, yet, having accomplished that which he had the wisdom to know sufficed for active life, resigned the volume he loved for the sword he envied, and, through regular gradations, became a general at nineteen, and such a general ! well might Peter set him over the city he planned, but which Menzikoff raised, the port and navy he desired, but Menzikoff brought to bear ; but why trace his earliest deeds to you, who know them better than myself ?

While in England, and even here, I have conversed much with the ambassadors from various courts, many of whom know him well, and universally acknowledge his talents, and the service he rendered his country as a diplomatist. It is common for all to praise the administration

of the late empress ; we well know, Ivan, whose it was. Though he might send some whose satire galled him to Siberia, how many did he recall whom Peter in his caprice had sent there? who relieved the people from their most oppressive tax? rewarded architects and artificers, protected merchandise, raised schools for the poor, gave refinement to the rich, and—

That word refinement checks my colloquy, for it brings the princess, his tender, pious, and most loving wife, before me. How will she bear the separation? Be not surprised if I should be in Russia almost as soon as this letter, for the express purpose of consoling her, and aiding you and all else who are capable of touching the heart of our young emperor, to procure her husband's recall. Yet how can I leave the sweet girl who seems to derive her daily existence from my presence? or how dare to behold Mary at a time when her sorrows will render her more endearing than ever? Besides, what hope have I, or you, or any human being, of moving that heart which she has failed to soften? How is it possible that so much firmness can dwell with so much weakness? But Amabel sends for me, and, as I have not seen her to-day, I must obey her wishes.

Bazilch has arrived, and given me your letters, but I cannot reply, for I cannot even read them; he has made me more wretched, more mad than ever, and but for a faint, faint hope that his information is incorrect (since it was received after leaving the Neva), I should be utterly overwhelmed with despair.

He tells me, "Menzikoff and all his family are banished to Siberia; that the sentence overtook them on their route to Plescoff, and included the empress expressly, though she was scarcely recovered from the smallpox, which she had caught from the emperor," and adds, "that from his own knowledge Princess Menzikoff was far too ill to travel anywhere with safety."

O God! what are racks and tortures compared to those evils to which these delicate, suffering, and most guiltless victims are exposed? I can only take refuge in the hope of their deaths. Yea, the mother and her offspring will all perish; bitter grief, piercing cold, severe hunger, the loathings and the terrors which belong to luxurious habits, and new situations, all will contribute to this end. Mary will pity all, labour for all, and be the last to perish, upheld by her faith in God, and her love to her kindred; but soon must she also lay her pale cheek on her father's bosom, and die in his arms.

That father, alas! he is strong to suffer; he may live, he may return, but the messenger of mercy will be too late to save the rest. They will bring him back with the weight of a hundred winters stamped on his furrowed brow—the sense of more sorrow concentrated on his heart than thousands sustain. Perhaps they will bring back a suffering idiot, on whom his enemies may gaze with horror, and his friends weep a deluge of unnoticed tears.

My sorrow, my abstraction, have greatly affected the sympathizing invalid. I write this portion of my letter from Cintre, the most beautiful, romantic scene to be found in Europe. But what are trees, and rocks, and palaces to him whose soul is transported to that "hell on earth," from the name of which every Russ

shrinks from his very cradle! Mary in Siberia! —O God! where sleep thy thunders—

* * * * *
I have told all to Amabel; for it was better she should know the source of my sorrow, than be grieved by my unavoidable retirement and estrangement. She would fain comfort me by an assurance that the banishment of Menzikoff is only a temporary correction, a check given to his overweening haughtiness, and cannot be intended as an abiding punishment, because partaken by his innocent family. The earl unites in this opinion, and I would gladly believe him right; perhaps even now they may be retracing their steps; the repentant husband (whom Bazilch describes as being much like Lady Amabel in his disorder) has already recalled the empress to his throne and his heart: but can even her angelic nature forgive this cruel experiment on her feelings, this injury to her faultless mother? No, Peter, she will be lost to you forever!

You tell me little beyond her having been very kind to the Czar as a nurse, and that, although very pale, she retained that beauty which, in her husband's eyes, was indispensable. It is well; but to me the casket, if defaced, would still have contained the jewel of my soul.

I have left the family, that I might roam over the hills, and hide me in the thickets, as the restlessness of sorrow prompts; but I am so importuned to return, that perhaps I may. Should this awful journey indeed turn out the freak of temporary caprice, as they almost persuade me to believe, may it prove to the perpetrator a perpetual source of sorrow and remorse, an imbodyed and abiding evil. But no; a Doulourouki will not curse his sovereign, nor, in fact, do I hold it as the deed of the Czar.

Doubtless you have letters on the road for me, which reveal the whole of this terrible transaction. Oh! that you may be able to convey somewhat of an antidote, and allay the fever that burns in my veins, and at once threatens me again with a bed of sickness, and prompts me to hasten home. Pity me, dear Ivan, and pardon me, if I urge you to aught beyond your power, or fail to write with due respect. I am no longer myself, but I believe I still love you, thank you, and confide in you. Theodore.

Pau, in France, June, 1726.

Dear Ivan,

Your despatches have not come to hand, and I cannot believe you would neglect them. I have left Bazilch at Lisbon to ensure them, and Lord Partinscale will, I am certain, take care of any that may go to England, whither his affairs have called him; and I am now conducting Amabel and the countess to the south of France, the heats of Cintre becoming too great for the invalid, who seems only capable of existence while changing the air by slow travelling. Here we expect to be met by her cousin, Lord Borrowdale; and, as he is coming from Germany, it is possible he may have heard much later news of the proceedings in Russia than have reached me. The alternations of hopes and fears under which I suffer have again shaken my health severely, as you may suppose; but the mind is the seat of suffering; and it is not now affected, as formerly, by the loss of blood, when its memory faded, and its powers were quiescent. No, my imagination was never

so vivid as now, my recollections so numerous and faithful; the former perpetually conjures up scenes of suffering in Siberia, all poured on the head of one whom the latter placed before my eyes in all her sweetness ten—

The young nobleman is arrived—how tumultuously every pulse in my body is beating! This is not to be endured; I must break in upon the caresses of a mother—I must know my fate. If he can tell me nothing, even in spite of Amabel's entreaties I must proceed to Russia, and learn the truth; nor shall all the snows of Siberia stay me if Mary lives and—

The paper on which these lines were written was again marked by the tears of the writer, and was so injured as to prove his agony. It was enclosed in another sheet, written about a fortnight after, and dated from Nice. Its language fully explained to Mary the hesitation it was natural Ivan should exhibit when pressed to submit these letters to her examination. She knew that he must have writhed already under the conscious guilt of his conduct, and the honest confidence of Theodore, whom she believed he could never dare behold again—how, indeed, could he look upon herself? She cast her eyes around the cottage, rejoicing in his absence, and gained from that consolation and power to proceed.

Nice, August.

We have arrived at this place, to which Bazilch is coming, but whether with letters from Russia I know not; enough to say Lord Borrowdale gave me accounts of much that was terrible; and in this city I have met General Razoski, who has just brought hither his drooping wife, and has more than confirmed the tidings.

Was I not a true prophet? Did I not deem it murder by wholesale—murder by torture such as the Czar Peter, in his most ferocious moods, would never have inflicted? But I will be calm—I will not rouse the fiend within. I will relate what he learned at Moscow from soldiers who conducted the latest gangs of criminals to that side of the country whither Menzikoff was sent some months before.

His own guards had already told of the death of the princess. She expired, Ivan—the mistress of the palace of Oranienbaum, whose splendour she graced, *expired in a wagon*, far from all human aid save that of her helpless and distracted family. Menzikoff resolutely carried her corpse to his own distant dwelling; but where that angelic woman breathed her last, though two hundred versts beyond Nishnei Novogorod, will Theodore Dolgourouki raise a monument to her memory.*

What follows next?—why do I hesitate to trace on the paper words written on my heart in characters of blood and fire! Arrived at their future home, the whole of the young family were seized with smallpox, of which the young empress died, and was buried with her mother. You told me, Ivan, she already had passed through this disorder; she must, therefore, have died of sorrow and fatigue, the victim of her tenderness. The general adds that it was believed all would die eventually save the young child, who was incapable of comprehending the

many miseries by which it is surrounded; and they spoke more especially of the state of Menzikoff himself, who was already bent down to the dust by these reiterated strokes of misfortune.

Ah! why was I thrown at such an immense distance before I heard of this affliction! Had I been in England, I might have reached Russia, and followed her even to Siberia—no, she would have been already in her frozen grave!

One thing alone remains on which my heart may lavish the tenderness due to Mary, and I expect confidently your assistance; it is securing that sweet flower, that Siberian snowdrop, to which she was, while life remained, a devoted sister. I will nourish it even in my heart of hearts. Should the father live, he will rejoice to trust me with this little helpless one, though he denied me his unequalled Mary; and no emperor will pretend that the babe has deranged his government or insulted his person—in short, I will have her. I will journey to Berenzof, or beyond it, for my prize; and if then denied the right of possession, the Dolgourouki shall once more prove his right to the name he bears. It is not more than five years since the army, at Menzikoff's bidding, placed Catherine on the throne; have the soldiers forgotten the general they then worshipped and obeyed? God forbid that I should be compelled to try! but this last tendril of a withered tree, meet to be monarch of the forest, shall dwell beneath my roof and twine around my heart, even as she had been the offspring of that beloved girl who has gone to her early grave pure as the snows that cover her.

The general confirmed my ideas as to the base influence exerted on the weak mind of Peter by the personal enemies of Menzikoff, but he named no one, and replied to all my questions with a guarded manner, even when himself affected by his sad story. The strangest thing is his assurance that you remain in favour, and, with little exception, have been constantly about the royal person; strange that you should not detect the secret plotter, for you are quick in observation and sagacious in conclusion. Doubtless you knew and saw the beginning of this intrigue, permitting it, alas! to continue, because you hated the subject and envied his success, but was astonished when the deed was done, and found yourself incapable of redressing the injured: but did you try, Ivan? Did you remember that Theodore bade you be the guardian of Mary?

My heart is full of strange misgivings, and every hour weakens the one tie which binds me to earth: may the Eternal pardon the rash resolves, the dark despair, the vain murmurings of his wretched creature! Spare my father all knowledge of my sorrow; I will command myself sufficiently to write him by the conveyance of the general offers; and, remembering the shortness of our northern summers, I will, in a short time, send back Bazilch to forward the only wish that remains to me on earth, the rescue of Catherine Menzikoff. Assist me, and render me again your affectionate THEODORE.

No. 5. *Theodore to Ivan Dolgourouki.*

Dear Ivan,

I have, as yet, received no letters from you. The circumstance torments me the more, because it compels me to be suspicious; but I

* This monument is in existence now, and mentioned by travellers.

will not give way to this feeling, because in my own person I have a proof of its fallacy. I, who have always been open to a fault, as liberal as a man of principle dared to be—whose repugnance to guile has driven me from the haunts of greatness, have been considered capable of what in my own person I consider to be revolting baseness; yet, as the world is constituted, it is certain my position made me amenable to false judgment. The knowledge of my own innocence—indeed, my utter incapability of selfish consideration, much less of avaricious desires, make me slow to believe the many accusations which are now, Ivan, openly made against you. No, I will not, till I see you face to face, believe you to be the artful enemy, the cold-blooded destroyer of the best and fairest creature God ever made. A Dolgourouki may be ambitious, violent, prejudiced, but he cannot be so cruel, so malignant, so swooping in his baleful and hidden hatred, as to destroy all—all by one fell swoop."

I will try to write of myself. From the time of Lord Borrowdale's arrival, and during our slow progress to Nice, I perceived a certain coldness in his politeness which I thought could proceed only from suffering, in consequence of Amabel's open preference of me. I concluded that he had been smitten by her charms before he set out on his travels, for she was then a most lovely girl, and as sprightly as she was handsome, and it would be natural for him to suppose that her parents would guard her for his sake, therefore I sympathized with him as a disappointed lover, and one day took an opportunity of communicating my opinion to Amabel, as a hint that she would, as much as possible, save his feelings at those times when she was able to see a family group in her apartment, which was not often the case.

To this she replied, "You are mistaken, Theodore, for Henry loved me much less than either of his brothers, who both hold me dear as a sister. It is not the jealousy of a lover, but a *legatee*, which afflicts him. I know he has written, urging his father to hasten to Nice, and doubt not they have, by some means, found out the tenour of the will I made at Lisbon."

"Have you made a will? Surely you had no occasion, for the countess would be your heir?"

"I have not forgotten what I owe to my beloved aunt, for I have left her a noble legacy; but all the bulk of my property and my diamonds are yours. You know I have often deplored, to my aunt herself, the sad mystery which prevented you from giving me your hand and name, for two long years, in which case I should have endowed you with all—all had it been tenfold; therefore, if I should die, the present disposition of my affairs is for them better than they might expect; but they may not think so."

"Revoke that will, dear Amabel, I beseech you, for neither as your lover nor your husband will I accept property which I well know your uncle requires for the advancement of his large family and his high rank. I have no claim on you, my sweet young friend, and they have many."

"Claim!" exclaimed the fair girl, half rising from the sofa to which she is now confined. "You have my heart—the first, last love of a being who lives but in your sight, and thanks you for all she has known of real happiness here, and all she has been taught which may

lead to happiness hereafter. Have you not sustained my fainting frame unnumbered times? read to me the holiest books; prayed with me and for me! even disabused my weak mind of that veil which my disease cast around it, and shown me my danger, while you bestowed its consolation! Yes, you have been all to me! my affairs are settled, and you must not deny me the privilege of a wife in offering her dowry."

"To me money is useless; I am rich enough now, and I shall be more so by-and-by."

"Then give Harry Herbert a fortune; present the earl—"

"My sweet Amabel must see that I have no right to lay her worthy family under obligation, even while subjecting her to the charge of ingratitude. Much as I respect them, much as I owe them, they could not accept from me as a stranger, without pain, that which you had alienated. Your own act is necessary to render your gift valuable—suffer me to be your amanuensis."

"Then you refuse me everything, Theodore?"

"No, I will give you my hand, Amabel. It is a worthless gift; but I am now a widower, and, since you have expressed a wish to bear my name—"

The letter dropped at this moment from the hands of Mary; her head sunk against the wall, her eyes became dim, yet vision after vision arose in her mind of a marriage ceremony, a pale yet splendid bride, who, charmed into existence by the tenderness of her consort, recovered as by a miracle, and revelled in prosperity, while she pined in the wilderness, the victim of another's folly, another's error. The child, looking up, beheld her pallid face, and eagerly hastened to recall her to herself by every endearing epithet, and at length so far succeeded that she caught her to her arms, and, remembering the kind intentions of Theodore towards her, was moved to tears, which, for the present, relieved the sense of suffocation that affected her. In a short time she resumed the letter, having now arrived at an enclosed sheet, which she was certain Ivan had not unfolded: the narrative continued thus:

I spoke these words with difficulty, Ivan, but they were received with an emotion so joyous, so grateful, I may say, that I can never repent having uttered them; but yet, in her weak state, such emotion was injurious. I cannot dwell on the many trying scenes which followed during the next ten days, but in the course of them she dictated the will I desired, leaving the legacy she had designed for her aunt to my kind young friend, Harry Herbert, and also making provision for "the surviving daughters of Menzikoff." I made the number plural, for I do not know but Ulrica may survive. This is committed to the care of Sapicha. My own name was not in the will: the earl was sole executor.

Methinks you ask, "But were you married?" I answer we were not: but even to the last she seemed pleased with the idea, which she connected, as the countess told me, with the arrival of her uncle; on the very hour of his arrival, her gentle spirit passed without a sigh to its eternal home.

Long as I had foreseen this loss, and harassed as I had been with far severer trials, I was surprised to find myself so much affected. I

knew not till now how much her sympathy had consoled me, and her dependance stimulated me to self-command. The utter solitude and helplessness under which I laboured, induced me to resolve on proceeding immedately to Germany, knowing that in Kreuss and every branch of his family I should derive all of comfort I am ever destined to know, and I thought Baziloff was as likely, with your assistance, to effect my purposes with regard to Catherine as myself.

Having in a note expressed this intention to the family, I received an immediate pressing invitation to the room where they were assembled, when the earl mentioned much surprise at my intention, saying "they had expected I would follow the corpse of his niece as chief mourner, seeing that my situation with respect to the deceased was known not only to all the English, but to the general inhabitants."

I expressed willingness to show any possible respect to one whom I had loved and honoured so much.

"You may probably be enabled to communicate the wishes of Lady Amabel on this point."

"She told me, in the presence of the countess at Lisbon, that it was her wish to be buried wherever she might happen to die."

"Then application must be made for a place in the Protestant burying-ground, the poor girl being deemed a heretic; but I apprehend you, prince, are the person to whom we must look for directions."

"Her will is deposited in her own travelling cabinet. In that she has appointed you, my lord, her sole executor: I remember no mention of a funeral in it."

"Then you confess to having read it, Prince Theodore—perhaps to having dictated it?" said Lord Borrowdale.

"I must have read it, because I wrote it," said I, firmly but calmly, though his manner annoyed me; "but I certainly dictated not one word beyond saying, 'I trusted she would remember my dear friend, your brother Henry.'"

"But allow me to say, Prince Theodore, whatever may be the law or the custom in your country, in ours no man can legally write a will entitling himself to very considerable property—no, not even if witnesses are at hand to prove the words of the testator, a precaution you probably did not take."

"Have the goodness to examine the will before you condemn it. It is very short, and was written at several intervals during last week, but it has been examined by an English lawyer, and properly attested by your own servants and the landlord of this hotel. I beg you, my lord, to examine it before you make farther comments."

"Before such examination, I protest against its legality," said the son.

"You speak rashly, Borrowdale," said the earl; "your mother is gone for the document, and we shall soon see."

Lord Partinscale's hands shook as he unclasped the seals, and he sent for the family physician and the English servants. Rapidly casting his eye over the paper, and from time to time looking out from it as if to inquire if this was the right testament, at length he said,

"This appears quite regular, Prince Theodore, but I do not see your name from first to last."

"You see a delicate compliment paid to me in behalf of certain females, who I have reason

to fear do not live to claim. It is not of such weight as to be worthy of a thought in such a property as this. May you, my lord, long live to enjoy it! for it could not have descended to better hands."

"I thank you, prince—I thank my sweet niece sincerely; but yet, I confess, I am puzzled. She loved you exceedingly; she had ready money to a great extent, and I have been led to think that—"

"To think, perhaps, that the sick foreigner your gallant son imposed upon your hospitality was a needy wretch, capable of abusing your kindness."

"No," said the earl, frankly, "this I could not think, for the cause of your sorrow was always frankly revealed, and it is certain we willed you to return at Amabel's request, and whatever she had bequeathed you would doubtless have been her own doing. Still, human nature is generally ready to take fortune when it comes in the way; and the fact is, a friend—a person about her did whisper that she had executed a will in your favour: it was done secretly, surreptitiously, and so, it appears, was this; the poor girl might have a fancy."

"I told you, my lord, simply the truth; a will was made (but it may be now destroyed), to which," said the physician, "I was a witness, and which she herself told me gave all her fortune to the prince."

"That will she commissioned me to destroy; I give it into your hand. I have done my duty in preserving it, because it proves even her attachment to me never rendered her ungrateful, though it diminished her means of showing it. I have now your leave to depart; my office is ended."

"I have wronged you," cried Lord Borrowdale, "and I entreat you to pardon me; but you will acknowledge it was not without some cause, prince."

"We have all been wrong, and are all under the highest obligation to the most generous of men," cried the earl.

"Do not say so, Theodore," said the countess, as she placed her hand in mine, "for I never held a momentary doubt of your honour, your delicacy, or your good-will to us; not a doubt of you ever shadowed my mind; therefore I trust you will accede to my entreaty, and stay with us a little longer, and pay the last duty to her who loved you well."

I did so, but am now setting out; and, as my route is towards Russia, I will finish this long letter at Leipzig.

Leipzig, Feb., 1739.

I have been here some time, but have delayed sending this package by the uncertainty of whether I ought, or would, ever address a line to you again; what I heard at Nice shook my faith but a little compared with that which here is continually pressing on me. No one hesitates to say, "it is well known that your intrigues ruined Menzikoff, whose absence has been a fearful loss to the country, and of late bitterly lamented by his sovereign." I repel this belief—I forbid such things being uttered in my hearing; but your long silence, your known hatred of Menzikoff, and, more than all, your determined ambition, which, wherever it is indulged, deadens the heart to every virtuous principle and human affection, conspire to make me fear you have been guilty. Digitized by Google

But I will not, dare not believe it; my aching heart forbids me to acknowledge I am bankrupt in friendship as in love; you cannot have so treated your nearest and once dearest relation—he who confided his sole treasure to your care—he from whom you generously averted a father's anger, and refused to accept his heritage. Courts, with all their mean subservience, their pitiful intrigues, their proud desires and earthly worship, cannot in three years have made you, Ivan, into a demon..

The baron has broken in upon me to say that he has spoken with the captain of a vessel just arrived, who told him that the emperor was dead, and that the Princess Anne, to the astonishment of every one, is placed on the throne, and has been received with universal acclamation and good-will. How is this, Ivan? our house always sought the succession of the legal heir; my father, yourself, and the mareschal were attached to the Duke of Holstein. It is plain you either had no power, or that which was insufficient, in which your opposition will prove your ruin. Short but most disastrous has been your day of power.

Fly to Pozecz, remain quiet, and you may be forgotten till the government is formed, and new cares or wars engross the ministers; my people shall receive instructions to obey you—you know they have been used alone to kindness and consideration. It is better you should go thither than to my father, for I must proceed to him, and support his spirits should trouble reach him, and you I dare not trust myself to meet; I would protect your person at any risk; my purse and my people are at your service, but your own heart tells you, Ivan, that you have severed every tie that bound you to the injured

THEODORE.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN Mary had closed this last letter, so certain did she feel that by that time Theodore had once more reached his native land, that she sunk down on her knees to thank God on his behalf, and scarcely had she risen when Brunkenthal and Alexander entered: rushing eagerly to the former, she exclaimed,

"Theodore lives! he is unmarried; he knows the baseness of Ivan, and his heart yearns to become the protector of Catherine. Nobly has he vindicated my poor father; and five months since he was in Germany, intending soon to visit his own country. Judge, then, how sincerely I desire you to set out for Moscow, where, at this moment, I doubt not he sojourns! O that I could myself fly thither, and relieve him from sorrow and solicitude!"

"Had Ivan, then, no cause for conjecturing that he was married?"

"He had good reason, for, in the course of the letter, even I was led to expect his union, though with a dying bride. The latter part of the letter denounces Ivan as a traitor to his friend: this he has not seen; it will pain him severely, and he will know that I have read it. I know not how to return it to one now in a state of punishment."

"Nevertheless, you must return the packet as you received it, Mary: Ivan must reap that which he has sowed. If his heart is not absolutely seared, and I trust from many circum-

stances it is not, he will be glad to escape from a meeting with his cousin, which must have overwhelmed him with the shame of conscious guilt and baffled deceit; he may even feel thankful that his punishment places him in the light of an object of pity to one whom even habitual affection and close affinity will never more enable to consider him worthy of esteem."

The following day was the Sabbath, and the cottage was crowded with the villagers; but as neither the governor nor Ivan was among the congregation, it was concluded that the prisoner was under close *surveillance*, which the family could scarcely regret at this time; for, separated from all intercourse with the world, as he really was, still a sense of fear rested on their minds lest he should counteract the benevolent plans of Brunkenthal, and, in some inconceivable manner, injure them still farther than he had done. On this account the good pastor dared not take any direct leave of his desert flock, though his heart yearned over them; and frequently his voice failed, his eyes filled with tears, and several were, from his evident agitation, struck with the belief that he was about to quit them. The hearts of Mary and Alexander responded to every tremulous tone of his voice; and when the Boyar entered, a little after the service had begun, neither could repress the strong emotion that affected them, and it was some time before they could pray for that heavenly support which they so peculiarly needed.

When public worship was over, and the people had shaken hands with all, as was their custom, the Boyar informed them that Alexovitch had prevailed on his mother, and held himself ready to accompany their friend. He added, "I would advise you to come to us to-morrow, for I find the snow in excellent order for the sledge, and it will not remain so for more than a month. It is evident that you had better lose no time in setting out. I will send a respectable widow to remain here so long as she is useful, and you can return in the vehicle which brings her. As my people have no intercourse with the village, your movements will occasion no observation, much as the women are given to tattle."

There had been no night so sorrowful as this in the dwelling of the exiles since that in which they were bereft of their father; and there were moments when their devoted friend could scarcely sustain the thoughts of parting, while the poor youth abandoned himself to sorrow at some times and at others tried to cheer Mary, who felt, in some degree, guilty of bringing this trouble upon him, since her situation certainly stimulated his movements. When the morning came, both were better, because both were busy. Mary had a thousand contrivances for the good man's comfort, and would have stripped her cottage and herself for the skins which might protect him; and Alexander, despite of every entreaty, packed all his choicest furs in the sledge, that they might be sold at Moscow or elsewhere for his convenience. The unconscious child hung round his neck, entreating him not to leave her; and it once passed the mind of Mary to send her to Theodore, but to this parting she felt herself unequal at such a time, and she dismissed the thought.

We have all known, probably, what it was to feel the heart riven, as it were, by consigning its most valued treasure to a distant country and for an indefinite time, during which many dangers must be braved, many privations endured; but we have not known the trouble of consigning our only friend, a man in the decline

of life, and bending under the infirmities of disease, to a journey of fifteen hundred miles over a country buried in snow, and with the vivid remembrance of its horrors, as experienced by ourselves. We may have been left behind to lonely sorrow, perhaps to poverty, but not to the sense of being divided from our species, as by the gulf of death itself; of being forbidden to enjoy what is the birthright of humanity, our native air, our local attachments, the "dear familiar faces" that smiled on our childhood. No; the most isolated and bereaved have not, like these orphans, been left alone in Siberia.

As considerable additional labour devolved on Alexander (for the good pastor had always been helpful in the care of the cattle), his necessity for exertion and the natural buoyancy of youth soon made him appear relieved, though far from being happy, as he was wont, for he longed for society, which in early life is an appetite of the mind, more especially to the highly-gifted and intelligent, not less importunate than hunger. He had, by the same circumstance, been separated from the aged friend whose person he loved, and whose conversation he enjoyed constantly, and that young companion who formed an object on which expectation could be exercised, and hope, curiosity, emulation, and contrivance continually dilate. He had too soon a new object of thought and interest in Mary.

It appeared that the excellent constitution she had received from nature, the unceasing exercise of her energies at the call of her affections, and, still more, the blessing of a pure faith, promising eventual happiness, had hitherto sustained her through the most afflicting losses and severe sufferings; but the alternate hopes and fears, the suspense under which she now laboured, were too much for her to endure. She required the cheering exhortations or the loving reproofs of her venerable pastor to control the sorrow she indulged, and the lassitude into which she sunk whenever Alexander set out on those expeditions which were now necessary, in order that he might replace the property given to their friend, and pay the taxes which, in summer, would be demanded. The good woman who assisted her labour sympathized with her sorrow, but knew not its source; for Mary, conscious of error, rather sought to hide it from her eye than confide it to any one. Considering how fondly she was beloved, how entirely relied on by her connexions, she had been yet unblessed, in a peculiar manner, by that confidence which is, to the young and loving heart, so sweet and consolatory, and which she had never engaged, save in her intercourse with that tender mother, whose loss seemed at this time more afflicting than it had ever been before. Since she had, as it were, relit the lamp of love by the letters of Theodore, and his name grew on her lip, his image rose to her eye, and his words and actions filled her memory, awoke her imagination, and occupied every avenue of her mind, she had found no one who could comprehend her feelings, and receive the overflowings of a heart at once so timid and so impassioned. Brukenthal, devoted to the service of the altar, had subdued or forgotten the emotions of his youth, had he ever yielded to them, and entertained only the love of an apostle for his spiritual children, or the tenderness of a father for the orphans of his friend; and Alexander's heart had never entertained a warmer flame than her own sufferings and relationship inspired. Often would she wish that her lamented father had been seated in his own chair, wearing the same pale but benevolent

countenance on which she had gazed in pity; for he would have understood her feelings, have joyed to hear of Theodore's safety, smiled to hear her recount his virtues, lament over his sufferings, and descant on the possibility of relieving them.

It was pitiable to see the poor child hanging over that sister who had been her maternal friend, her tender nurse, and begging her "not to die as poor papa had done, or at least to live till the flowers came again, and the lambs run on the greensward; for then, dear Mary, you will smile on me, and sit down on the grass, and teach me little songs."

Mary felt as if she could not live till that time came, yet it was not far distant, and surely she had lived through much more of trouble than she experienced now: yet, reason as she might, and try as she might to conceal her increasing weakness from her brother, he perceived it, and became alarmed to the most distressing degree, in his fear communicating to her a sense of danger she had never experienced, and which told her to prepare for the tomb at the very time when she was most anxious to live.

But at this hour she believed it was too late to hope, and that her duty was resignation only. Yet one object remained for which to struggle: it was that of placing Catherine, through some medium, in the hands of Theodore. She had long since sent his letters back to Ivan, but every word he had traced relating to herself or the dear child was distinctly remembered; besides, she was a ward of Sapicha's, and, if in Russia, would not only secure the means of education, but respectable subsistence. But how could she mention this desire to Alexander? She was herself hastening to the tomb: if she robbed him of the child he so fondly loved, in addition to all his other privations, was she not condemning him also to a premature grave, and burying the name and race of Menzikoff in oblivion?

One day, as they were all seated at their mid-day meal, the kind brother, taught by affection and her own example how to win the coy appetite of a languid patient, they were surprised, it could not be said displeased, by the entrance of Count Ivan, who was now, in externals, like themselves, a wool-covered peasant of Siberia.

Alexander rose, and drew a stool to the table, which Mary, with a faint smile, motioned him to accept; and he was not long in doing so, for hunger, which he evidently felt in all its keenness, banishes ceremony.

"I thank you," he said, at length, "not only for this relief, but for all your kindness; nevertheless, this is the greatest, because (at least the empress knows) of the extent of the injuries and injustice you have received in consequence of my influence over the late emperor. I have longed impatiently to visit you ever since that brutal governor took me, in my pain and weakness, from you, but I could not bear to see you; and when I now look at you, lady, I read my own sentence of condemnation anew: you are ill, and I have made you so."

"The winter has been singularly severe—probably my illness proceeds from that; but I do not deny that the letters affected me both with pain and pleasure, felt so acutely that I have been useless to my family ever since I read them."

Ivan seemed for some time deeply affected; at length he started up, saying, "Where is the good pastor? Is he visiting the Boyar of whom you spoke?"

"He went to the Boyar's, undoubtedly," said Alexander, in that tone which implies the diffi-

culty an ingenuous nature feels in using equivocation.

"He has taken all the furs from the corner," said the child, "and he will sell them to buy pretty frocks."

"I would," said Ivan, thoughtfully, "he had been absent on a better errand; but it is all right, undoubtedly. It seems I, too, am required to provide furs, yet neither powder nor a gun is given to me; in short, I am come for the express purpose of offering myself, Alexander, as your hired servant; the governor permits me so to engage myself, as a favour; and when I tell you how terrible have been my sufferings, even to the extreme of cold and hunger since I left you, I cannot believe you will refuse me. I am now gaunt with misery, but you know me to be in the prime of life, equal to labour, capable of exertion, and sufficiently conscious of all that is past to know that, as your serf, I should work with tenfold—"

"Hush, hush, Count Ivan, you can never be the serf of Alexander—you are the cousin of Theodore. Labour you must, for all labour here or starve; but we can never class you as a servant," said Mary.

"To no other but you can I look; no person in the village can give me employ, and beyond its bounds I am forbidden to go; my money, which, you know, was but a trifle, is expended in my clothing and payment to the people who nursed me in the relapse which followed my removal; and my government allowance is so nearly demanded for my wretched lodgings, that no other food can be purchased than the coarse fish which my weakened stomach utterly rejects. If you will not take me I must die. Alas! I am not in the condition of your father, Alexander—I am not fit to die. I am—"

"Say not another word; stay with us; my sister is provided with a female friend. You shall help me, for I have a gun to spare, and I shall need assistance in the fields; but we receive you not as a servant, but a friend."

The words "a friend" at the same moment escaped the lips of Ivan and Mary, but no comment followed from either.

Ivan would have stretched himself that night in the corner where he had first been placed, but Alexander would not permit it, seeing there was a bed unoccupied in his own chamber; and on the following day he became the instructor of Ivan in various duties which they partook together. It was found that the younger person was the far better angler and more certain shot, but there was much of ability in the elder, and a pliability of temper, a willingness to be taught, and a deference to the teacher, which could not fail to win its way with a nature so generous as that of Alexander, who, finding himself really happier than he had been of late, could not forbear a sentiment of gratitude towards Ivan as the cause of it. In a few days this sense increased, for it was evident that Mary was somewhat better. She listened with deep interest to Ivan's stories of his boyish days, when he led Theodore by the hand through the neighbouring forests, and when, at a later period, he accompanied him, a gallant youth, to his first boar-hunt and his first excursion on the Volga. By degrees she too became capable of speaking of him; and while the nurse snored on her stool, and Alexander, wearied with exertion, now slept by snatches, and at times became animated by the scene or the character of that person apparently so worthy his admiration, she was deeply engaged in commenting on the cir-

cumstances described; revealing her own opinions or sensations, and often painting her pale cheeks by a soft suffusion, as she admitted the merits of Theodore, recited the words of her mother, or even adverted to those passages in his letters which exhibited the traits of goodness and greatness unfolded in his conduct, or evinced by his sincerity in the hour of confiding friendship.

Having thus left poor Mary in the way to regain a portion of health and meek contentment, even from the man who had despoiled her of all, we shall now follow the good Brukenthal through his wearisome journey, together with that young companion who unquestionably lightened the way, though he occasionally tried the patience and exercised the prudence of the anxious minister.

CHAPTER XL.

BRUKENTHAL had by no means shaken off the pain occasioned by his first farewell, when he reached the dwelling where preparations were making for another; and a gloom sat not only on the faces of the anxious parents, but on that of every menial or friend within the vast establishment, which at this time appeared so elegant and comfortable as contrasted with the humble dwelling he had quitted, that scarcely could he forbear to wish once more that Mary could have brought herself to accept Alexovitch. He was now, however, so fully convinced that not a shadow of hope remained for him on that subject, that he sought conversation with his parents on the probability of his marriage with any lady of the court he was about to visit, saying, "he was happily not of an age to pine after one who had declined his hand when surrounded by many who were lovely and accomplished—great pains were now taken with the education of women of rank in Russia."

"Such women will not love us, nor our rustic ways; I wish my son to find a wife who will dwell with us in content, and not pine for the gauds of the city. We are not Russians who coerce the women we marry, and must therefore find our happiness in their affection, not their enforced obedience: a good girl, who will be happy in our love and share our cares, and whose children's children may play about our feet and cheer our old age, is the wife I desire for Alexovitch."

"He may find such a one in the city," said the mother, "for love renders all change and all sacrifice easy, and our son must be beloved—the empress had no heart to give, or the case of my son would have been different, I think."

"I must say that, in the excellence of his choice, he showed so pure a taste that I am convinced he can only be happy with a woman of intelligence and virtue—one who may grace his board, guide his servants, and rear his family honourably and religiously," said Brukenthal; being about to add, "that it would be a pity to tie so fine a youth to the daughter of an ignorant Tatar, or the cunning slave of a designing dealer;" but a glance towards the Boyarin checked his words, and she eagerly insisted on the possibility of her son's marrying not only wisdom, but wealth, rank, and intellect; and though the Boyar smiled at what he termed "a mother's weakness," it was evident that he was much of her opinion, and, since it evidently gave him courage to meet that which he felt to be a great trial, Brukenthal would not damp

hopes which were so natural they could not be deemed blameable. Never did there exist a parent who was not ambitious for his offspring; it is inwoven with the very fibres of his heart, the outwelling of his purest affections; and, though it may be his duty to restrain, he cannot be expected to eradicate it. There was another point which involved extreme solicitude: the Boyar believed that his son would be valuable to any sovereign who distinguished him: should he be called on to serve in the army, it would not be possible for him to decline, for himself and all his ancestors had been at one time or another engaged as soldiers. In this respect, he could only commit him to the care of Providence, and the good councils of his reverend friend.

Sleep sat lightly on the eyes of all that night, and tears were abundant in them the following morning, but the journey was proceeded in, and its necessities provided for. Warm wrappings, rich furs to be worn on dress occasions (an hereditary order bestowed on a brave ancestor ages before), a letter prepared with no little difficulty for Count Woronzow, a case of liqueurs, and a package of caviare, were placed in the sledges; and a heavy piece of gold given into the hands of Alexovitch, who was unable to utter thanks for it, and their long journey commenced. Away flew the coursers, accustomed to the bracing air; and the sledges, gliding over the smooth surface of the unyielding snow, soon appeared like swallows skimming the frozen pool. The motion, exciting as rapid, roused the spirits and awakened the hopes of even the older traveller, and mitigated the pain of parting with the loved ones he had left, by the promise of future benefit to all. To the younger it offered a thousand day-dreams of honourable enterprise and merited distinction, which were all mingled with memories of love and home.

It so happened that relays of horses, after their own had returned with the servants who had accompanied them, were got with little difficulty; and, as they had the advantage not only of the moon, but glorious aurora borealis, which rendered the wild, white earth a flood of light, they travelled onward till long past midnight, when they were received at the post-house, a filthy hovel, where poor Brukenthal, weary as he was, could obtain no repose, and vainly sighed for the quiet and cleanliness which had reigned in a Siberian cottage, under the management of an enlightened and energetic female.

On the evening of the sixth day, by dint of either threats or rewards (and of neither was Alexovitch a niggard), they had crossed the Ural Mountains and the River Petahora, while it was yet a slender stream, and they now hoped to find little delay in prosecuting their way through northern Russia; but fatigue rendered rest indispensable to Brukenthal, and the younger traveller held himself well repaid for the postponement of his arrival in the far-distant capital by the conversation he enjoyed and the instruction it conveyed. His mind was hitherto an un-tilled soil, but readily did it open to receive the seeds of knowledge, and every particle of information now communicated became the subject of cogitation and the source of improvement. Never had youth and age blended more happily, yet many a time did Brukenthal say to himself, "how inferior has this young man's education been to dear Alexander's, who is three years younger! Must that intelligent, informed, and high-minded creature, with so much observation, activity, and ability, drag out existence among bears and foxes?"

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Archangel was at length crossed, a milder climate was perceptible, and so much of a thaw had taken place that farther travelling in sledges was impracticable; therefore they sold these vehicles on arriving at that capital, and purchased one of those light wagons which are found the best kinds of conveyance where the roads are full of ruts and sloughs, sometimes assisted by logs of wood, which relieve the traveller from mud, but increase his sufferings from concussion. Many a sigh did Brukenthal give to the memory of poor Princess Menzikoff, who, even in her most fragile and suffering state, was dragged over them; and often did he contrast her husband, as he had seen him, at the head of a numerous army, or entertaining the nobles of a splendid court, with the miserable exile who held in his arms a dying wife, and beheld the daughter he had aggrandized by destroying her happiness, engaged in the lowliest occupations of a village serf. He could not wonder that a heart, once so proud and sensitive, had been, as it were, rent piecemeal by mortification, sorrow, and self-reproach. But oh! how thankfully could he turn from such soul-harrowing views, to the contemplation of the meek, infirm, and patient man, by degrees overcoming his fears, and yet stimulating his repentance; seeking, in the word of God, for the promises of the Gospel, and holding them to his heart as blessings, compared to which past glories were as dross; forgiving his enemies, rejoicing in his friends, and looking with earnest desire to that great change which would prevent him from ever again becoming the vain and sinful man he had been.

When they reached Moscow, both gladly agreed to remain a week or ten days, not only for the purpose of necessary rest to Brukenthal, but to enable him to procure suitable clothing; for which purpose he called on some friends who yet remained to him from the companions of his schooldays, and to whom he could confide the sale of Alexander's furs. These, on examination, were found to be of the very highest quality, and therefore he selected the most valuable as a present for the empress; trusting that, if a better medium failed, this might facilitate his admittance to the Presence. The rest, together with Mary's jewel, preserved him from any painful dependance on his young friend; nor did he find the hearts of his old ones so dead to the memory of Menzikoff, or the situation of his family, that they would not cheerfully have contributed to the furtherance of his views. It was, of course, a source of trouble, and a loss of property to the inhabitants of the ancient city, when their irreverent Czar determined on founding a new metropolis, and they had been angry with him they deemed an upstart boy, when, at his great master's bidding, he forwarded his designs by indefatigable vigilance and acknowledged abilities. As, however, Menzikoff loved his native place, during the reign of Catherine (which might be termed his own) he had shown all possible favour to the inhabitants, and spent as much time as he could within it; therefore, his unexpected and unmerited fall had excited much latent anger against all who were concerned in it—a sensation confirmed by his death, which was generally attributed to a broken heart.

It will be readily believed that, while Brukenthal was thus engaged, his young companion was not unemployed. Alexovitch, with all the wisdom of his age and the activity of his habits, wandered miles on miles through that vast city of palaces and gardens, streets and cornfields,

churches, convents, prisons, and colleges. The eternal ringing of the bells was to him the most delicious concert; and the gilded steeples of the churches, the magnificent vestments of the priests, and the decorations of the altars, when, with a reverence amounting to awe, he ventured within, astonished, dazzled, and charmed him. The various vessels plying on the River Moskva, the lighter craft of the Neglina, which runs from north to south through the city, on the borders of which are seated the mansions of the ancient Boyars and Kneses, the wealthy merchants and tradesmen, intermixed with low and dirty portions of the population, every hour afforded him objects of intense interest, admiration, or disgust. The arsenal, the university, but more particularly the soldiery, whenever assembled, won him to their quarters; and their various manœuvres never failed to exhilarate the spirits, sometimes depressed by the sense of grandeur and multitude which surrounded him; for he thought that, once more mounted as he was wont, not one of all he beheld would "turn and guide fiery Pegasus" better than himself; and that, let him be once more properly equipped, he should be a man even among men in cities. As, by his father's special direction, this consummation of his wishes was not to take place till his arrival at St. Petersburg, he was induced by Brukenthal at length to leave Moscow, which appeared to him such a perfect heaven on earth, that he desired to resign all farther search after novelty, and desire that society which was now his only want, with the exception of that noble animal, which, from his birth, had been almost a part of himself, thanks to his Georgian relations, with whom, in his boyhood, he had resided.

Compared to the country through which they had travelled, all appeared now easy and beautiful, while traversing the only good road Peter the Great, with all his eager desire for improvements, and his unlimited power, had been able to bestow on his subjects. At length Petersburg, the gigantic outline of a proud metropolis, rose on either side the Neva in magnificent lines of buildings, all bearing the fresh, bright look of a new creation, and showing at once the grandeur of conception in design, and the deficiency in execution inevitable to a city scarcely thirty years old, which was yet crowned by a Cathedral, adorned by various palaces, fortifications, and other edifices. With all its beauty, Moscow still retained its first charm in the eyes of the young Boyar, though he was rejoiced to find himself in the place he had heard of as a fairy tale, which he rather desired than hoped to realize.

When Brukenthal had last visited the city which had been raised beneath his eyes under the superintendence of his friend, and had, therefore, more than common interest in his eyes, Menzikoff was, as we know, in the meridian of his glory, about to obtain the highest honour his sovereign could bestow. His name was dwelling on every tongue: those who were expecting employment were looking for recompence or courting attention; from the humble artisan to the accomplished artist, the young ensign to the hoary colonel, the aspirant who attended his first levée, or the ancient Boyar, who had dangled after four successive sovereigns, all alike were looking to Menzikoff. His splendid equipages were rolling near the palace, his beautiful horses were parading in the squares, his elegant vessels were sailing on the Neva; crowds of the lovely, the great, and the learned, were pressing to his entertainments, and the very sight of his palace

decorations sought for as a treat to the tasteful and the travelled. He appeared to be represented in every circle, either in his own personal greatness and unrivalled* activity, the number of persons in his service, the benevolence of his virtuous princess, or the beauty of his promising family. Every place and every person seemed full of him, for even those who envied his success acknowledged his talents, and, in their opposition, proved his all-controlling and animating power. Where was he now?—who held his power?—who dwelt in his palaces?—who revelled in his wealth?—who wept his sorrows and death? Of the many he had relieved from want or raised to affluence, who even remembered him in the city he had raised, governed, and adorned?"

Such were the passionate, the tender, and absorbing thoughts that rushed rapidly, not therefore transiently, through the mind and the heart of Brukenthal, as he retrud the streets of St. Petersburg; and as, in the agitation of his bleeding bosom, some thoughts escaped him in words, Alexovitch was alike grieved and surprised to see the man he had deemed too holy and abstracted from the world, too self-subjugated or aged for the tremours of earthly sensibility, still capable of suffering so much, and, in the simple-kindness of his nature, he replied, to the last words which he happened to have caught,

"No one remembers him as you have done, that is certain. No other person followed him to Siberia: you, and you only, were capable of that."

The absorbed soliloquizer started at the voice, though he attended not to the words of his companion; he saw the necessity of controlling the saliess of his mind, so long accustomed to expatriate in the freedom of the desert, and compel himself to enter on the great business before him. It was to him a circumstance alike pleasant and encouraging that the young Boyar's introduction was to the Count Woronzow, whom Ivan spoke of as being with Rozamousky Kartzchin and Restucheff, now at the head of affairs, and as having effected great concessions on behalf of the people when the present empress was placed on the throne. He argued from this that they were humane and conscientious men, likely to assist his wishes on behalf of the children of Menzikoff, whatever might have been their opinion of their father; and he well remembered frequently seeing the mother of Woronzow at the time of his last visit to Petersburg, as she was the intimate friend of the Princess Menzikoff, to whom she was sincerely attached.

Brukenthal was aware that the first care of the young Boyar must be suitable dresses in which to present his letter to the count, and, under his auspices, appear at the levée of his sovereign; therefore, his object on the young man's behalf was that of procuring the necessary artificers; and, recalling the days of his own military career, and the names which had occasionally been mentioned as tradesmen employed by his late friend, enabled him to secure the most fashionable workman, new as the employment was to him. He had not, however, calculated on the time required for the choice of clothing by a handsome young man of twenty-two, who, at the same time, desired to be equipped in the mode of the court, which was decidedly French, and yet, from a natural percep-

* No longer unrivalled, since the present emperor's energy and activity have probably never been equalled by either sovereign or minister. Digitized by Google

tion of its bad effect on his person, could not bring himself to relinquish the Asiatic garments he had hitherto worn, and which were, in fact, so much more becoming. Poor Brukenthal on this point felt himself unequal to advise, and, as he had now placed his charge in handsome lodgings, very near to the Count Woronzow, he left him to the task of his everlasting adoptions and rejections, and went forward to present himself to the Countess Woronzow, who would, he was well aware, prefer seeing him alone, that she might make inquiry freely as to her unhappy friend, the ill-fated princess.

She had herself died about a year before, and the good minister was unexpectedly ushered into the presence of a young and lovely woman, who was even now the bride of her son. This lady was highly educated and eminently handsome, but she did not then foresee that her charms and accomplishments, the fascination of her manners, and the true kindness of her disposition, would, within a few years, render her the very "glass of fashion" in the most polished courts of Europe, whither she accompanied her husband, then Prince Woronzow,* on his embassies. She was now very young, and, simply dressed, was sitting with a young female relative from the North, discussing the comparative merits of their respective provinces, when the good father was announced, and identified herself by rising to receive him.

Brukenthal appeared to advantage in the dress of his profession: his tall and slightly bending form, white locks, unpowdered, falling thickly round the lower part of his head, and partially shadowing a pale, oval face, replete with an expression of benevolence, firmness, and intellect, rendered him an object of attention to the young, if they were also the intelligent. The fair countess believed that he waited upon her to petition for himself or his people; it was the first time she had been so applied to in her new character, and she instantly resolved to supply him with assistance, not only in accordance with the feelings of her heart, but the importance of her high station in society.

Brukenthal explained by desiring to "see the dowager," the information of her death which followed checked conversation, but yet warranted intimacy: he took a chair and, having spoken of the late lady as she well merited, felt himself entitled to enter on his mission. With her husband, a man probably pressed for time, immersed in politics (and perhaps of an adverse party), he might have found difficulty, but the road to a heart that has only beat for seventeen years is always open.

Scarcely had he begun to advert to the sufferings and death of Menzikoff, when he was interrupted by the countess exclaiming,

"Dead, did you say, holy father? Is Menzikoff himself dead also? How will my dear father lament him, for it is his pride to have been a colonel in his regiment. My husband the count, too, will be exceedingly sorry, for he was planning his recall some time since, I know. True, he may be acquainted with this painful fact, and has said nothing, because he knew that all was over."

"Pardon me, lady, Menzikoff survives in his children. He lost one, it is true, and false reports have been spread as to the death of the rest; but I have myself just parted from a daughter fair and accomplished as yourself, a noble son now in early manhood, also a little daughter, his

excellent wife's last gift, and a god-daughter of the good Empress Catherine, a sweet child, whose first words were learned in the deserts of Siberia."

The countess and her young companion burst into tears; but curiosity soon overcame pity so far as to enable the former to say, "But you could not actually see them in Siberia?"

"Yes, lady, I did, for I visited them, and, I trust, consoled them for nearly a year, many months being consumed in reaching them."

"Good God, father, how you astonish me! Did ever man go voluntarily into that horrible country? go even beyond Tobolsk?"

"The attachments of youth are very strong. I loved Menzikoff ever since I taught him as a boy to read; and, though I was frequently angry with him, and often reproved him, I found the old love still linger round my heart. No wonder it increased tenfold when the dreadful news of his banishment and his wife's danger reached me. My friendship was likewise increased, exceeded, by a motive you, madam, may not at this early period have weighed—the anxiety which, as a minister of religion, I felt for the eternal welfare of one deprived of all the ordinary means of grace. It is enough to say I am repaid, far more than repaid, for 'my labour of love,' for his children's sake I now earnestly desire an interview with the Czarina, whom I have seen more than once at Oranienbaum. Will you, madam, secure me your husband's interference to this end? He can refuse you nothing."

The fair bride's cheek flushed with a sense of gratified love or vanity, but she hastily answered, "I know not that. Count Woronzow thinks me little more than a child, I fear, at present. Natalie, what do you say?"

"I say that on Thursday, when the empress has a *levee*, this good gentleman should present himself there, and I cannot doubt the count will so introduce him that he may plead his own cause; that much I think you may promise; but farther interference in the hurrying occupations of the count at this period I fear you cannot."

Brukenthal bowed smilingly to the fair adviser, and might have quoted the English poet: "Oh! how much wiser art thou than thy years!" but the friends were whispering with each other, and in another moment the countess addressed him in a tone at once gay and kind, saying, "You have been living long in the wilderness, my good sir, and can scarcely be provided with those ecclesiastical robes which must be worn at court, both by ministers of the Greek and Lutheran churches; suffer me to provide for your appearance. A female sovereign must be obeyed, even in trifles."

"I am most willing to be your debtor, courteous lady, as otherwise I might press too much on my companion, the young Boyar of Ostroket, who will wait on the count to-morrow, and is even now preparing for the same ceremony. There are limits to his purse, though none to his kindness."

When Brukenthal had departed, both the ladies were eloquent in his praise, not only because he had evinced what they truly termed the heroism of friendship, in visiting those regions whose very name blanched the cheeks of every noble Russ, but that "he was a dear old man, who sought the rescue of the young, and knew what was lovely and lovable in them." The countess was convinced "that he was pious and learned, a pattern and an honour to his church, with more of true courtesy in his manners than the French ambassador, and without any of his grimace."

* See Jonas Hanway.

The result of this opinion was an immediate order for his robes, and a determination to appear in person at the *cortège* of the empress, it having been of late promulgated that a few married women of high rank were henceforward to attend the sovereign's *levées*, in order to give an air of grandeur to the apartments, and one of propriety, as respected a young and beautiful female sovereign.

Brukenthal returned to Alexovitch with his mind soothed by the kindness and consideration he had met with, but yet duly weighing his slight hold on important concerns, which it was impossible for two young creatures like those he had quitted to communicate. He had, of course, long felt that his cause was in the hands of Him "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice," yet was he not the less sensible of what might be termed the *risk* of his undertaking, and the extent of his requisition; on behalf of these orphans. In Siberia they had the means of life, in Russia not a single copec, and the only relation which, so far as he knew at present, remained to them, was the sister of Menzikoff, with whose husband he had been long in a state of open enmity—their mother had been an orphan and an heiress, and was without connexions. It was a question to him whether it might not be safer, since the belief of Mary's death had been diffused, to allow things to remain for the present in that state, for the very name of dowager empress might be unpleasant to one who had stepped by successful intrigue on the throne, and was, therefore, always likely to dread a rival.

The aspiring spirit of Menzikoff could not be forgotten, and who could say, except himself, that it did not exist in a daughter, who had attained her majority, and might be inclined to make herself amends for past suffering by grasping future greatness. These thoughts he confided to Alexovitch, so far as might render him cautious as to mention her only as princess or his neighbour, which he promised to do, being delighted with the account given of the ladies in Woronzow's family, to whom he was himself introduced on the morrow. After this interview, both our travellers were expected to make part of the dinner circle in the hospitable mansion of the count, such being the custom with noble families in Russia, whose style of living is every way on a princely footing, and generous to profusion.

Alexovitch was the first distant Boyar who, as his father's representative, paid homage and offered allegiance to the new Czarina, and, as such, he was especially welcome; it was, however, not considered the etiquette for him to accompany his venerable friend, who was recommended to the immediate care of the chamberlain, while the young Boyar must be himself presented by Woronzow as the representative of his father. The young man of course submitted to the dictates of his friend, but much did he lament the circumstance, and, in his frank admission of how much he owed to his highly-valued mentor, Woronzow, whose discernment of character and appreciation of merit were remarkable, became captivated by his ingenuousness, and determined to watch over him as a younger brother, in points where he would necessarily be a better guardian than Brukenthal could be.

The following day they repaired at an early hour to Count Woronzow's mansion, and the good minister, accustomed to look with a parental eye at the children of his friend, could not

help gazing with pleasure on Alexovitch, and wishing that his parents could see him, for he had, with admirable tact, combined in his dress the stiff forms but splendid materials used in the Russian court, with the flowing drapery worn on state occasions by his ancestry. The novelty of his situation, and perhaps the looks which the countess exchanged with her husband and Natalie, frequently suffused his cheek with a modest yet manly glow, and Brukenthal could only wish, for the sake of those far-distant dear ones continually on his mind, that his own reception might be as gracious as that which he could not doubt would be granted to his handsome, noble, and artless young friend.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE empress had not yet quitted the Winter Palace, but as it was known that she would soon set out for Moscow, the *levée* was expected to be better attended than usual. Brukenthal found the anteroom crowded by foreigners, military men, heads of provinces, and many of the old nobility, among whom certain persons whom he considered to be ministers of state, or pre-eminent for their influence, were moving, and apparently receiving the most obsequious attention or abject servility. He had never visited this scene since the time of his first campaign, but he well recollects that the same eager desires for notice, the same breathless gaspings after favour, the same condescending smiles or haughty indifference, were floating in the atmosphere of that day as this. Even his own sensations of eager expectation and gratified pride recurred to his mind, and his heart rose in gratitude to Heaven, that from that time to this he had not experienced them, nor would have been subjected to them now save for a high and holy purpose.

His reverie was interrupted by the entrance of a party of newly-advanced officers, who had lately distinguished themselves, and now endeavoured to press towards the doors of the drawing-room, so as to enter with those nearest it; in the commotion thus made, an opening was formed, and the eye of Brukenthal (who remained near the place where he entered) was drawn towards a young man of distinguished appearance, whom he fancied he had seen before. He was tall, pale, and of serious, almost mournful aspect, which was partly accounted for by his dress, which was black, with lawn ruffles, and a sword-knot of black crape. A brilliant star on his left side indicated nobility, and the gold collar of the order of St. Andrew surrounded his neck. The same honourable distinction, together with that of St. Alexander Newski, and a mareschal's baton, were in his hand.

So striking was the figure, so intellectual yet melancholy was the countenance of this nobleman, that the minister could gaze on no other, though he had understood additional strangers of note, and even Biron, the beloved of the empress, were passing close to him; and he could not forbear looking to the person Count Woronzow had consigned him to, with the question of "Who is that fine-looking man in black, with the orders in his hand—he who speaks to no one, and whom nobody looks at: is he a foreigner?"

"It is Prince Theodore Dolgourouki; the family are very important, but at present under a

cloud, for his first cousin is banished to Siberia. His duty brings him hither, in consequence of the death of his great uncle, whose orders and baton he must deliver to the empress."

"But what fault has this prince committed?"

"None whatever, for he has only lately returned, after an absence of several years; he is an excellent man and a brave soldier, but how he will be received no one at present can guess."

Brukenthal scarcely heard the last words, so eager had he become to make his way to Theodore, and whisper words which he trusted would dispel forever the cloud that hung upon that noble brow, but at this moment the doors were thrown open with a thundering sound, and the nearest were compelled forward by those behind. Brukenthal did not advance, for his present object was completely defeated, and from his commanding height he had now a perfect view of the empress and her surrounding court, exceedingly impressive, and eminently grand and beautiful.

The Empress Anna Iwanowna was seen reclining on a throne of crimson velvet, surmounted by a canopy of the same, ornamented by gold trimmings of the most dazzling description. Rising, she saluted the company with graceful courtesy and an urbane and smiling countenance, thereby displaying a fine form, which, although not tall, was full of dignity and elegance. Her features were small but intelligent, her complexion fair to brilliancy, and her eyes large, blue, and full of gentle light. She wore a velvet dress of pale yellow, powdered with silver stars, which was fitted to the fine outline of her person; over this was a loose robe of green satin (the favourite colour of the country), which was lined throughout with the purest ermine, the sleeves being surmounted with the richest and darkest sables ever brought from her northern dominions. A stomacher of the finest brilliants, from which chains of the same costly material hung to her feet, had a truly royal effect, and on her round white throat and open chest they also shone with dazzling brightness. A coronet of many-coloured precious stones mingled with the full tresses of light brown ringlets which adorned her well-placed head, and were the especial gift of nature.

On either hand stood about twenty ladies magnificently arrayed, and literally glittering with gold and jewels, yet not thereby eclipsing their noble partners, for the numerous diamond-hilted swords, brilliant buckles, stars, orders, and gold chains seen on every side, conveyed an idea of wealth and splendour unrivalled by any court in Europe, and contrasting in a manner altogether unparalleled with that rude, starving, and yet industrious people which then constituted the bulk of the population. Again poor Menzikoff, in his magnificent habiliments and his sheepskin coverings, rose to the memory of Brukenthal.

There was a sudden silence, the crowd parted, and Theodore Dolgourouki stepped with stately yet modest bearing towards the throne. Gracefully sinking on one knee, he presented the orders lately worn by the venerable grand marshal, whom he termed "the loyal and devoted servant of his country, and its greatest sovereign."

"That the deceased nobleman was such the annals of Russia will bear witness," said the empress, as she received and then handed the orders to the proper officers, "and we are well pleased to receive these honourable memorials

of his worth from a relation whom we can esteem so sincerely as Prince Theodore. It would be hard if, in so powerful a family, we possessed not one faithful subject."

Theodore essayed to speak, but there was a wave of the hand, a glance of the eye, which for the present arrested his petition, and he fell back into the crowd dispirited and disappointed. Far different was the impression made on others by a reception they considered unexpectedly gracious, as it was well known the Dolgourouki had always been attached to the Holstein family; on every side smiles and congratulations awaited him: some courtiers declared that his long absence had so altered his person that till that moment they had not recollected him; others were delighted at seeing him look so well, and many desired his company most earnestly who ten minutes before had not been able to see him at all.

One person alone understood him and sympathized with him in that crowd of the great and the educated; and, despite of the interest excited on behalf of the *protégé* he regarded so warmly, and who at this moment was presented by Wronzow, and received with such peculiar graciousness as to awaken universal admiration, pressed near as Theodore retreated from the Presence, and said in a low but distinct voice,

"Count Ivan has been ill and suffered much, but his health is restored; he has a home and friends who will not suffer him to want."

The position of Theodore was such with regard to the empress that he could not turn to the speaker, but he started and said in an undertone,

"Friends! Is he, then, no longer in Siberia?"

"He is near Berenzof, without a ruble in his purse, or, perhaps, a sheepskin to cover him; but be easy—the son of Menzikoff will feed him and clothe him."

"The son of Menzikoff!" exclaimed Theodore, thrown off his guard, and suddenly turning at the moment, when Alexovitch, enraptured by the approving smiles and gracious words of royalty, with all the emotion most honourable to his unsophisticated feelings, on withdrawing from the throne had fled to Brukenthal, and, seizing both his hands, was now withdrawing him forcibly from the spot where he stood towards an empty place in which he could listen to him; but at this very time the chamberlain addressed the pastor, and inquired his reason for desiring an audience, as now requested by Count Wronzow.

At this moment Brukenthal, distracted by royal claims, solicitous almost to misery for the opportunity of saying a few more words to Theodore, and imparting that precious secret he had determined to confide to no other ear, found himself so agitated that he could only say, "Give me time, noble sir, give me time. I am a stranger to courts, yet my business is of the last importance; life, ay, more than life, is in the issue."

Everything is mysterious with the mysterious; Count Razumouffski, whom he now addressed, instantly conceived that the simple Lutheran clergyman might be connected with a conspiracy against the reigning sovereign; several had recollected him as a friend but censor of Prince Menzikoff; he had heard him utter words of the most startling nature to the only Dolgourouki admitted to court, and had arrived in town with the wild son of the most northern Boyar: what could be the motive of his conduct?

Another view as rapidly succeeded; the Boyar's son had been most graciously received, and the smiles of beauty were at this moment beaming on him. That of his sovereign had transformed him, as by magic, from being "the unlicked cub of a Siberian bear," into all that indicated natural grace, gallant bearing, and manly beauty. While the chamberlain was thus halting between two opinions, Woronzow, at the suggestion of his lovely bride, relieved both parties by taking the hand of Brukenthal, and leading him, with a dignified air, immediately to the empress, who had now resumed her seat.

"For what would you petition, holy man?" said the sovereign; "we oppose not the ministers of Heaven, whatever name they bear. What do you ask for your Church that we can grant consistently?"

The words of the empress recalled the bewildered senses of Brukenthal, and, rising from his knee in obedience to the motion of her hand, he stood before her free and unembarrassed, yet evidently affected, as he answered,

"Nothing, great sovereign, have I to request for my people or myself, but your majesty has subjects in the wilderness, spotless as the snows which environ them, and of loyalty untainted as the air they breathe. For them I kneel—for them I hold up these feeble hands in supplication."

The hitherto complacent countenance of the empress became overspread by a frown; her quick eye had marked the short communication he had made to Theodore, for they were both too tall and *distingué* to escape observation; and she saw the prince still lingering near the entrance, with his eyes anxiously bent on the father. She felt assured, or, at least, afraid, that he was interceding for one she had determined to punish, and hastily, but in a low voice, she said,

"For them! for whom?"

"The children of Prince Menzikoff—the faultless, helpless survivors of a mother your majesty knows to have been virtuous, and of a father who is now incapable of ever giving offence again."

"Then Menzikoff is really dead? dead in Siberia!"

"I performed the last offices over his corpse seven months ago, and his weeping children laid him with his wife and daughter."

Tears struck into the eyes of the empress, and, by a look towards the chamberlain, the room became immediately cleared of all save the hoary petitioner and Count Woronzow. After giving a few moments to agitating but tender recollections, she said, in a plaintive and encouraging voice,

"And thou, good man, wentest forth into the wilderness to share their labour and soothe their sorrows: I now remember thee well. A proud heart, but yet a great man's heart, was broken when poor Menzikoff's head was laid low!"

"He died an humble penitent, a happy Christian, forgiving his cruel enemies."

"That is more than we shall do," said the empress, firmly; but adding, soon after, in a gentle, almost familiar tone,

"Father Brukenthal, saw you aught of Ivan Dolgourouki?"

"I have seen him myself, in want and misery, suffering the pains inflicted by rheumatic fever."

"Was he left to die of cold and hunger?"

"No, please your majesty, he was tended and

restored, that so your merciful intention might be fulfilled, and time given him for repentance."

The empress smiled most blandly, yet turning to Count Woronzow, she said, "Count, it is our pleasure that this friend of the criminal Dolgourouki shall be consigned to custody within the palace till the truth of his statements can be proved—not that we have any doubt of his integrity, or desire to render his imprisonment painful (for, in truth, we think it will be serviceable to such a wanderer), but it is our duty to examine facts so remarkable and conduct so unexampled."

Brukenthal would have prostrated himself before the empress, and referred her for the truth of his assertions to the son of the resident Boyar, whose loss of himself could hardly fail to be a great one; he would have said a thousand things to change a determination so inconsistent with the kindness evinced; but in another moment the empress had disappeared: the gorgeous scene, the desired explanation, the awakened hope, had vanished like a dream; still it was a reality, for two of the imperial guards stood on each side of him, and desired him to follow them.

The apartment to which he was conducted was situated in the highest part of the palace; but beyond this circumstance, and that of having a sentinel at his door, there was evidently nothing to complain of. In a short time he was waited upon by the librarian, who brought him a few books, and inquired what would be his choice when ready for more, intimating, at the same time, that he would soon receive a visit from the secretary, whose duty it was to examine him, the librarian politely adding "that he had himself no such unpleasant duty to perform, and that his own calls were only those of intercourse with a learned and good man."

The perfect innocence, and, indeed, magnanimity of his conduct as regarded his late visit to the exiled family, and the submission to an unjust, cruel, and capricious sentence which he had inculcated to Menzikoff, left him without the shadow of fear for that part of his conduct which belonged to his journey to Siberia; but since it was very evident that Ivan Dolgourouki was an object of abiding anger to the empress, and, being at a considerable distance, he had not known what passed between her and Theodore, he concluded that his supposed connexion with that family was the cause of his coercion, and he therefore examined all his past connexion (which had always been attended with pain and difficulty) as regarded Count Ivan with the most scrupulous exactness, alike anxious to act with strict integrity, and that prudence which would farther his views for the orphans, whom he became every hour, if possible, more solicitous to benefit.

When, however, the secretary really questioned him, it was entirely concerning Menzikoff and his family, more particularly as regarded the disposition and talents of his son; and the speaker did not hesitate so to praise the deeds and eulogize the abilities of Menzikoff as to prove the feeling of the empress on his behalf, thereby encouraging Brukenthal not only to speak with all possible freedom, but to trust (however appearances were against him) the exiles for whom he laboured would not eventually be abandoned. His anxiety, therefore, reverted to Alexovitch, whom he heartily desired to see; but, that not being permitted, the gentleman promised to inquire after him personally, and was not long before he conveyed very sat-

isfactory accounts of his movements, which appeared to be wholly under the guardianship of Count Woronzow, in whose house he was now fully domesticated.

Although Alexovitch had, in the first place, eagerly sought to share his overweening pride and happiness with the venerable friend he alike loved and respected, yet, when this temporary excitement subsided, his mind reverted, with much natural acumen, to the scenes which had been passing around him, and which he had innately commented upon with a tact for which few might have given him credit. Struck with the appearance of Theodore, his keen eye never forsook him, and was, therefore, rendered fully sensible of the universal flattery of his reception, on retiring from the Presence, as contrasted to that constrained politeness or positive indifference which had preceded it; and this, on his arrival at the count's, he did not hesitate to mention, adding, "Well, I heartily thank you, sir, for taking me to court, and the empress for receiving me so pleasantly; but yet, I never desire to go again. Command me to a troop of howling wolves rather than a bevy of false courtiers: a keen blast is less deadly than a cold smile. I will use the advancing summer, and get back to Siberia."

When he learned that Brukenthal was imprisoned, these feelings were so vividly increased, that scarce any promised pleasure could prevent him from immediately executing his design; but, having been informed that the empress was about to visit her ancient capital, and would be followed by Brukenthal, he consented to remain till he also could join in attendance, considering that perhaps the minister might then receive the liberty so causelessly denied, and that he should once more have the joy of seeing him; and so fond had he been of Moscow, that he felt as if nothing short of happiness might be expected there. He thought, with sincere sorrow, that the mission of Brukenthal might be considered as frustrated, but he did not the less hold the injunction he had given him as sacred; and, frequently as he was drawn to speak of his late interesting neighbours, he was never led to refer to Mary's secret or his own.

Woronzow being appointed ambassador to Vienna, and not likely to return to his country for some years, became kindly anxious to secure friends who might add to the pleasures, and have an eye on the movements of the young Boyar during his stay at Moscow; and the countess was still more solicitous to procure a suitable home for her orphan cousin, who was very poorly endowed by fortune, though abundantly by nature. A maiden aunt at length offered her a home, but it was under so many restrictions as to be grievous to the countess, though received thankfully by Natalie. During these transactions in the early part of the day, the two young people were left much together, to amuse themselves as they might; and the morning generally glided on very agreeably between the music of Natalie and the many warlike encounters related by Alexovitch, while the evenings were frequently not less interesting to him, from those conversations of the countess which dwelt on the merit of her friend, and the future inconveniences one so young and gentle might have to encounter. At length she had the pleasure of saying "that, at any rate, the dear girl would get a trip to Moscow, in attendance on the empress, which was a great consolation."

Alexovitch felt it was such to himself undoubtedly, and he resigned himself to a few

months' attendance on courts, and society with courtiers, with remarkable facility, considering the disgust he had received, and the resolutions he had expressed.

CHAPTER XLII.

So perfectly quiescent was the empress with regard to her prisoner, that Brukenthal was frequently persuaded she had forgotten him, and, what was of more consequence, forgotten those for whom he had vainly pleaded; and, since he was permitted to walk twice or thrice a day in the gardens under a single sentinel, he could not forbear, at times, to meditate on the chance of escaping, and once more reaching his distant home and his pastoral charge in Lithuania. His attendant visitors never answered any question which could throw light as to the motives for his incarceration, much less its probable duration; and their own information turned wholly on the impending journey of the empress, and the celebration of her coronation in her ancient metropolis, to the great joy of her subjects. He was, ere long, consoled (in one sense) as to the idea of having slipped the royal memory, by learning that orders had been given to bring him after her as a state prisoner, but with all due observance of his comforts; and, in fact, so far was he from being forgotten, that his tall, thin form, sacred habit, long silken locks, his pleading looks, and those accents in which truth and compassion animated every inflection of tone, were continually present to the empress; and it was even difficult to her to forbear seeing him again, and conversing with him personally, although she had, of course, heard the answers he had given to the many queries she had dictated to her secretary.

At length the splendid *cortege* set out, and Brukenthal followed, but under such easy *surveillance*, that several times, to the great satisfaction of both, Alexovitch enjoyed a short interview with him, and communicated, in a low voice, those resolutions he had formed on the subject of returning home, but still with the salvo of preferring Moscow to all the world. Any other person would have perceived that another preference was owned by his heart, and hung upon his lips; but Brukenthal saw only that he was what the fashionable world would have called "immensely improved," and he looked into his face to see if any corresponding errors (as is too often the case) accompanied such improvement. No; Alexovitch blushed slightly, it is true, but the eye looked brightly and frankly forward, and the very circumstance of seeking out for him bespoke the prevalence of his former feelings and honest confidence. The old man's heart was cheered by the recognition; he trusted he should return better, not worse, for his trial.

Many magnificent coronations had been celebrated at Moscow, but none like this. The empress, as the daughter of Ivan, the brother of Peter the Great, and who, for a time, shared the crown with him, was desirous of obliterating the traces of the last two reigns, and, so far as possible, reuniting her memory with those of the older sovereigns, whom Moscow had been in the habit of lauding; and, since there had been royal persons weak enough to think she had conceded too much to the people, she determined to establish her claim to be considered great by assuming additional splendour: a happy medium, by which vanity is reconciled to humanity, and the privileges of tyranny exchanged for those of admiration and personal attachment.

The amazing concourse of people pouring into Moscow on every side, but more especially from the Asiatic dominions of Russia, was such as not only to crowd the houses, but the fields and gardens of Moscow; and the glittering of white tents, variegated temporary pavilions, and newly-painted wooden houses, erected on every tenable place, altered for a time the character of the city, by rendering its vast outline filled by human habitations. The wild music of the atabal, and other instruments from the mountain tribes, the ringing of not only all the numerous bells of Moscow, but many introduced for the occasion, filled the air with sounds of perpetual gayety, though questionable harmony; and the prancing of steeds, the glittering of assuazas, the glancing of diamonds, by no means unfrequent in the streets, from milk-white turbans and costly embroidered headdress of various forms, rendered the scene on every hand one of equal novelty and splendour. Whatever might be thought in other parts of this immense empire as to the legality or expediency of placing the present sovereign on the throne, there was no doubt in Moscow that everything was justifiable; and the appearance of the empress, with her personal captivations and liberal grants, rendered her the most popular of all the royal personages who had ever filled a throne.

All the riches of the Kremlin,* the various crowns belonging to various nations, and sceptres inlaid with jewels beyond even the wealth of India, and which would reduce to comparative insignificance any similar royal collection in Europe, were exhibited on this occasion. The dresses of the archbishops and the other dignitaries of the priesthood concerned in the ceremony, in their dazzling splendour exceeded even that of the pope, and every circumstance connected with a ceremony imposing even under its simplest forms, combined to render this impressive, for the taste employed was of the first order, and the wealth lavished unbounded, seeing that subjects and strangers from many countries came expressly thither to contribute to the expenditure or partake its benefits. On every side of the vast city might be seen innumerable flocks and herds, and caravans of fruits and vegetables; while the river was covered with the produce of distant lands, among which an amazing quantity of flowers presented the appearance of a moving garden, and at once charmed the eye and breathed perfume through the air.

As the little property of our good Father Brukenthal had been carefully removed to his comfortable prison, and now brought with him to Moscow, it struck him that this was the time when he had a good opportunity to present poor Alexander's prize to the empress, thereby at least reminding her both of the existence of the exiles and his own; for, although nothing could exceed the respect and kindness with which he had been treated, and his personal appearance was so much improved that he seemed twenty years younger and stronger than he had been when consigned to pleasant imprisonment, he sighed for liberty. The greater number and variety of people he beheld from his high window in one of the palaces of the Kremlin, the more was he impressed with the idea that, if he could wander among them, he should be able to learn some news of those dear ones of whom he was perpetually thinking; and since the very ends of the earth seemed moved to attend this mighty festi-

val, there were more impossible things than that the Boyar himself should once more venture into the world, less for the coronation, perhaps, than the sight of his son.

To his great satisfaction, the skins he had refused to barter were found in the most perfect state, and got up with that attention to neatness, and a proper display peculiar to female care, so that, if laid before the empress even at this busy time, they could scarcely fail to attract attention. They consisted of the skins of black foxes, considered more valuable than the finest sable, and of ermine of extraordinary beauty, together with several tails of blue foxes of the most exquisite tint. These were committed to the care of a page who was frequently in the Presence, but who had been of late so perpetually engaged, that the usual attendants on the prisoner could not obtain an interview with him till the evening of the day preceding the coronation.

From all Brukenthal could afterward learn, it appeared that he had been indeed forgotten; for the empress at the same moment expressed herself enraptured with the furs, and gave orders for him to be placed in the Cathedral, where he could be near her person. She likewise (late as it was) commanded these beautiful furs to be employed in facing the royal mantle, and more than once spoke affectionately of Alexander as the "dear little fellow" who had sent them; so that if all the observations made by the empress had reached the ears of the anxious friend, he could not have entertained a doubt of her kind intentions eventually; but beyond her gracious acceptance of the furs, and her considerate commands for his accommodation, he could learn nothing, and greatly did he fear that the name of Alexander had actually been forgotten in the business.

It is utterly impossible for us to attempt any description of that gorgeous and awful spectacle which placed the crown of all the Russias upon the head of a young and lovely woman, thereby endowing her with a power which, although diminished in her person as compared with her predecessors, amounted to a far more absolute control over freedom, property, happiness, and life, than reason or religion should vest in any human being. Absolute sovereigns have frequently been excellent sovereigns, and become blessings to their people; but we question whether they were themselves happy: would not their conscientious solicitude destroy their tranquillity?

Velvet draperies, with gold fringe, covered the walls of the Cathedral, save where shattered banners proclaimed the victories of Russia; the altar and the priests made the eye ache with splendour, nor could it find relief in resting on the nobles and their ladies; yet it sought one "bright particular star," now kneeling, in apparent humility, to receive from the King of kings that responsible sceptre which would render her God's vicegerent on earth, the governor and guardian of uncounted millions. Perverted would have been the understanding, and cold the heart, that did not rise to heaven for one so weak by nature, so mighty by situation—one who could neither err nor suffer without inducing thousands to partake her fault or share her misery.

Brukenthal prayed for her sincerely, for he felt that her burden, however gilded, was too heavy to be consistent with happiness; and while the trumpets were pealing, the cannon roaring, the multitude, within and without, rending the heavens with their acclamations, his

* The treasures of gold and jewels long kept in the Kremlin were happily removed, by the vigilance of the guards, a few hours before Bonaparte reached Moscow.

abstracted spirit was silently invoking that of Menzikoff, as if in reproach for having desired to load his gentle Mary with cares she was not born to expect nor fitted to encounter: while all around him considered their young and beautiful empress in the light of divinity, whom it was their glory to serve and their happiness to obey, he the more fervently prayed "that wisdom from above might be granted to her," and "that she might find her own happiness in that of her people."

Gardens and squares, every open place and every public building save churches, had tables "spread with costly food;" and when Brukenthal returned to the palace, he was conducted to a place where he might view the returning procession, and invited afterward to a seat reserved for him, where he would be likely to find the son of the Boyar. For this young man he naturally looked among the splendid train who walked along a decorated platform from the Cathedral to the principal palace (there being five royal residences within the Kremlin), but his eye was first arrested by the graceful figure of Natalie, who was one of twelve fair damsels of rank and pre-eminent beauty employed in strewing flowers before their lovely sovereign, who was followed by another twelve supporting her train. In casting his eye over them, Brukenthal could not forbear exclaiming, "Ah! Menzikoff, your daughters should be with these!"

The principal ministers of the crown and their stately wives passed onward, when, lo! a venerable man, yet less aged than infirm, advanced, leaning upon a staff on the one hand, and on a tall and noble-looking son on the other: that son was Theodore Dolgourouki.

From that moment Brukenthal could see no other object, and his desire to approach him, to speak with him a single moment, became more intense than could have been conceived possible in a spirit so regulated as his. At the time, forgetting entirely the circumstance of his being a prisoner, he made an effort to leave the room, in order so far to intercept Theodore as to give him a sign as he was entering the door, and with great simplicity told his keeper his wishes, to which the other replied, "In that case, my good sir, it is my duty to conduct you to your own apartment; the empress did not suppose you capable of abusing your liberty by speaking to any one."

Brukenthal remained a few minutes in rumination, and then said, "I will return thither, and by locking me securely, you may yourself, I hope, enjoy the gay scene around you; as a trusty servant, I honour your vigilance."

The man did not forget Brukenthal when he had consigned him to the only silent spot in Moscow, or, we should say, lonely spot, for the air was redolent of sound, and it is certain, men

Bade the cannon to the trumpet speak,

The trumpet to the heavens, the heavens to earth,

on this festal day, while our good minister, wondering why he was thus environed with mystery, burning with desire to communicate with Theodore Dolgourouki, and dreading some unfortunate slip in the well-meaning speech of poor Alexovitch had produced all this trouble, felt that, let who would be happy, he was not among the number. There were even times when he wished he had never forsaken the children of his adoption, thereby leaving them, or, at least, one of them, to the probable corruption of Ivan Dolgourouki, whose influence over Alexander he had long dreaded.

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Leaving him to the alternations of hope and fear, which necessarily attended an imprisonment at once so liberal and so exacting, and which, to a person in his state of mind and his habits of freedom, appeared of interminable, or, at least, hopeless length, we return to our banished family.

CHAPTER XLIII.

WHEN Mary had, as we have seen, somewhat recovered the powers of her mind, she became sensible that she could live, and that, therefore, it was her duty to live on, if only for the sake of Catherine, who would, in a manner, be utterly lost without her. She thought Alexander, as a man, might struggle through life, more especially now he had got a companion, but that to leave so sweet a child in the wilderness would not only imbitter her last moments, but, in some measure, be a reproach to her, as it was certain, much as she had had to struggle with in sorrow, climate, and various privations, she had borne up under all till the knowledge of Theodore's life had unsettled her spirits, by renewing the hopes and fears of renovated love.

She now anxiously followed the steps of Brukenthal and Alexovitch, calculated on the rapidity of their journey in comparison with her own, or with the far longer one which the good man had taken principally on foot, when he came, like the angel of mercy, to their desolate dwelling. No one can know the value of a letter from a far-distant friend but those who are utterly hopeless of receiving such a treasure; there were neither posts nor messengers to Siberia; even the Boyar seemed to have cast his son upon the deep, hopeless of hearing tidings of him till he should return; and though, from time to time, he visited them with great kindness, and spoke encouraging words, yet they well knew that he was ignorant, not only of his son's movements, but of the situation of Russia as regarded the government, on the stability of which it was probable their only hopes of liberation depended.

The long and terrible winter under which they suffered at length began to disperse, and the usual sudden restoration took place, to the astonishment and especial delight of Ivan, who, although he had not seen nearly the worst part of the Siberia winter, was subject to inveighing bitterly against the climate, and denying its power of change. At this time its great promise to the exiles was that of hearing news, and never did a fond wife look to see the messenger from a battle-field more than they desired to see the wonted pedler, who might give them tidings of the capital, and, by some barely possible chance, tell the fate of Brukenthal, who, they well knew, would seek for such travellers by every possible medium.

Long did they wait in vain; either the severity of the winter had been spoken of and scared them from their usual journey, or some better market was opened in the neighbourhood of Tolsk; and even the prospect of finer furs at Berenzof would not tempt them. At length one solitary trumper arrived after the fair at Nishnei Novogorod, and to him they looked as to a messenger from another world.

They now learned the reason of every other pedler's absence: all the world was gone to Moscow, where the Empress Anna was to be

browned amid her ancient and adoring people; everywhere the magnates of every land were pouring forth; he had met thousands in the Ukraine, and beheld them on the Volga; they were traversing the steppes, they were skirmishing the rivers. Tradesmen of every description were taking their wares to the great mart; himself and one or two more visited the desert, in order to obtain good bargains from those dealers who had no chance of securing choice of customers.

The unusual length of the winter had enabled Alexander to secure some furs, since he had been assisted by Count Ivan, but they were of a far inferior quality to those taken by his friend, and would do little more than pay his own tax; but he entered on the sale with spirit, because he thought that, at a time of public rejoicing, the empress would be likely to perform acts of mercy; and he trusted that, as the news of the coronation would have reached Moscow by the time of the travellers' arrival, they would remain there until this magnificent ceremony gave an opportunity of petitioning the empress. Little did they think that poor Brukenthal had twice traversed three hundred miles of his wearisome journey, and as little that the Empress was even now wearing the furs which Alexander had procured; still, much in the dark as they remained, since they knew the same causes existed for hope as before, and had a perfect reliance on their revered friend, their hearts were cheered by the pedler's communication, and, as usual, he became, for a short time, their welcome guest.

As the man drew towards the table on which Mary placed bread, meat, and the common drink of the country, Ivan, who was mending a fishing-net, turned with an indignant air towards the window, muttering something that seemed to be "Prince Menzikoff's daughter is strangely employed." The man caught the first words (though her for whose ear they were designed did not), and he said, with a tone of great feeling,

"Yes, the good prince is gone; God rest his soul! our country will never see a greater man, I take it, and we have lost another very good one, the grand mareschal Dolgourouki."

Ivan started, but turned farther from the table; but, in doing so, he cast a beseeching look to Alexander, who was smoothing his skins in order to make them appear to advantage. Feeling assured that Ivan desired to hear more of his family, but was unwilling to expose himself, he said to the trader, "Of what complaint did the good mareschal die?"

"Marry, sir, of old age, to my mind; but there are not a few who say that the disgrace of his great nephew, Count Ivan, was the death of him; not, as I suppose, he loved him, for nobody did that except the Czar Peter, and he found him out towards the last, they say."

"Let us talk about the furs, friend," said Alexander.

"Why, for the matter o' that, they are the better subjects; and the name of Count Ivan must needs be a bitter word to you; besides, they say one should never speak ill of the dead."

"The *dead*!" exclaimed every one, involuntarily.

"Why, if he isn't dead, he soon will be: he was sentenced to the mines by the new empress afore she'd reigned a month, and I spoke with several who saw him in chains at Nishnei Novgorod. 'Twould have been a strange thing if he had escaped; there's a Ruler higher than

the emperor, though many of the great seem to forget it."

When Ivan saw the man sit down in easy fellowship with the household, his pride rendered him extremely indignant; and when he first mentioned the name of his family, he used threatening gestures, which Alexander repelled by signifying that the stranger was under his protection; but now his spirit instantly quailed, though he knew the assertion to be false, and the mere idle chit-chat of the common people; yet the very word "mines" had a thrilling effect on his nerves, and he hastened to leave the cottage, lest any suspicion of his identity should arise, and the pedler, in the hatred he had conceived for him, so speak of his apparent welfare as to lead to a severer sentence.

Mary saw him depart with much satisfaction; for, although desirous of saving him from the mortification the pedler was likely to inflict in reflecting on his past conduct, the name of Dolgourouki was music in her ears, and she could not lose the opportunity of inquiring whether Theodore had returned to Russia.

"Yes; that prince who was gone so long, the people about Pozeck feared he would never come back, has returned; and, as I am told, is such a favourite with the empress, it would be no great wonder if she married him."

"Married him!" gasped Mary.

"Why not? he is a born prince; no bit of an upstart, made yesterday: he is handsome, and good, and brave. I wonder where she could do better; all I fear (and many other fear too) is that she will not do so well, dear heart."

Our trading politician cast a fearful look around, lest the walls should whisper to the winds his audacious surmise; but, too much imbued with the spirit of his class to be silent in a place where his information, whether true or false, was listened to with deep interest, he could not forbear to add, in a low voice and with marked emphasis,

"Biron is recalled; I passed him on the road near Pultava. I fear much our great empress will never wed the prince I spoke of."

Alexander, who had seen the receding colour of Mary, and felt for poor Ivan's self-inflicted hunger, hastened to converse with the trader as such, thinking justly no news from the world they had lost was better than that which was, probably, false and certainly embarrassing. Finding that Ivan was determined to skulk in the copice till the trader had departed from the premises, he accompanied the unconscious alarmist to the village under pretence of business, and took care to leave him there, after accepting from him very inadequate exchanges for his poultry.

When Ivan had returned to the cottage in consequence of having seen the departure of the stranger, Mary could not forbear remarking the effect of that suffering he had doubtless endured during his few hours' absence; for he appeared as if years had passed over him, and reminded her of her father in his first days of affliction. Full as her mind was of other things, yet she could not forbear looking upon him with sincere pity, and advised him, after taking food, to compose himself by sleep, adding that he must be prepared for such visitants, for, since one had ventured, others might be expected."

"I shall always hide myself the moment I see any human being approach the place. I had rather be torn to pieces by the wolves, or starved to death in the desert, than be condemned to the mines; and who can say that, if an or-

der to that effect were sent; your brother, my benefactor, might not be condemned along with me?"

Mary shuddered as she ejaculated "God forbid!" The thought was horrible; she sought to shut it out by saying, with a half smile, "Whom do you suppose the good folks of St. Petersburgh would give the empress for a husband?"

"Not Ivan Dolgourouki, I apprehend: Siberia has another *rana-avis*."

"No; they say Theodore is the chosen."

"Would to God they spoke—"

Ivan had started from his seat, his eyes flashing fire, and his lately shrunken form expanding to its full height, as if by sudden inspiration; but, as he checked his strange exclamation, he sank down on his seat, and covered his face with his hands for some time, when he arose, and, without uttering another syllable, either from a sense of shame or grief, retired to his usual couch in Alexander's chamber.

Mary felt offended, surprised, and unhappy. She could not doubt but Ivan had wished, though he did not fully express it, that Theodore should marry the empress; and the sudden flush of his eye seemed like the rekindling of an aspiring courtier's hopes; and how did the tones of his voice at that moment differ from the deep and mournful ones in which, but just before, he had spoken with such horror of the mines, and such grateful tenderness towards her brother! While thus musing, the words escaped her, "Can this be ambition?"

"No, lady, it is love," was replied in a low but distinct whisper.

Mary started, and beheld Katinzka (her good help) close beside her, looking upon her with all a mother's solicitude. She in general moved about her employments so quietly, and had attended to Mary in her hours of languor so affectionately, that she was not only valuable, but dear to her; and, having received abundant proofs of her good sense as well as her good disposition—knowing, too, that there are few family secrets where all are dwellers in one room, though fluttered, and, in fact, alarmed, she replied, in a confidential tone,

"Count Ivan could not experience such agitation from a passion which he had long known to be hopeless. No; it was the bursting out of that flame which, in his nature, was always the strongest—the love of power, the exercise of pride."

"No doubt he has plenty of that; but his astonishment at that moment gave birth to hope he had never felt till then; though suddenly checked since it has been awakened, it will be so again, and may be a source of great trouble to you all."

"To himself it will doubtless be such; but, as we cannot help him in his trouble, we are not likely to be teased by him. Indeed, he has never mentioned the Princess Elizabeth but once—never even alluded to her."

"Nor ever will again. *You, you only*, possess his heart. Is he not happy even here? with all his burning pride, his indignant hatred, his luxurious habits, and even his frequent personal sufferings, he is happy: love alone could render him so. Even since I came I have seen him change from a lion to a lamb, but it was from the humbleness of his station, from the hopelessness of his passion. Should any circumstance occur, or even a false report of any circumstance, which destroyed your prospect of recall, or gave Prince Theodore to another, ah! what would become of you if he resumed

the nature of the lion? Some men are cruel in their persecution of those to whom they give their hearts—they wound whom they woo."

Every word of the usually silent Katinzka made a deep and most painful impression on Mary, for her eyes, thus painfully opened, saw, even in the friendly pains taken to restore her spirits, in which Ivan had talked continually of Theodore, a gradual increase of the interest with which it had been her misfortune to inspire him. Of late he had never mentioned his name, or listened to those allusions by which she had, in the modest fondness of her heart, sought to draw him to the old subject; he had many times returned abruptly to the house when Alexander was at a considerable distance, and had been more affectionate to Catherine than he was wont, as if seeking for a medium through which to conciliate her sister. Every circumstance tended to increase her disquiet, since she could not fail to be sensible that, as a companion, Ivan Dolgourouki was every way serviceable to her brother, and had undoubtedly been so to herself, although she never could divest her mind of a certain dread of him, from which Alexander was entirely free—he had only heard of his evil influence, she had witnessed it. At this time she felt as if he were an awful demon, born for the destruction of herself and family; and, sinking with a gesture of despair into her father's chair, she exclaimed in equal perplexity and sorrow,

"What shall I do! what shall I do!"

"Take refuge from a bad man with a good one," said Katinzka; "though Alexovitch is distant, he is not dead."

These few words of the young Boyar's attached nurse occasioned almost as great a revulsion of feeling and opinion in Mary as her longer declamation; she felt assured that the good woman had conjured up one lover as a scarecrow to frighten her into the arms of another, which considerably relieved her as to those fears of Ivan she had sought to awake. Nevertheless, enough remained to exercise thought and prudence, and she so far called upon the latter, that, when Alexander returned, he could not read more uneasiness in her ingenuous countenance than that which he himself experienced in consequence of their continued ignorance as to the progress of that friend who was their sole dependance.

Though it was now late, since they were alone (for Katinzka had retired when she had performed what she deemed a duty, and Peter had long been asleep), Alexander sat down to look, as they had often done before, into their own sad situation, and endeavour, by rekindling hope, to preserve fortitude. After talking over all they expected, and more which they scarcely dared to expect, young Menzikoff said,

"I now wish very much, my dear sister, that you should visit the Boyarai; they have been wishing for you and Catherine all the summer, and as it will now be very soon over, we must lose no more time. You will have some news to carry them respecting the coronation, which will render you the more welcome, and, in the course of your stay, they may receive some. We have both been too busy to meet of late."

"I am ready to go to-morrow," said Mary, eagerly.

"You are always ready to be kind, dear Mary, and attend to my wishes; and, since I am certain it will do you good to go, I am aware that I have been selfish in never taking you before. But, indeed, it was not altogether my fault, for I have often talked of it, but Count Ivan has al-

ways opposed it most violently; he insists that it would be a very indelicate thing, a kind of forcing you upon the family; whereas I told him that we thoroughly understood each other, that you had thoroughly understood their son, yet they still continued their affection. I even told Ivan he was gone a long journey; but he objected, for all that. Surely it is great nonsense for poor people like us, living in the desert, to bind ourselves by mere etiquette, in cases where there can be neither mistake nor impropriety; but you know I am necessarily very ignorant of the forms of society."

"But I am not, brother; and, as I am the principal party, and know I am the obliged party also, I shall accept the invitation."

"But I must tell you the truth: when I spoke very strongly on the subject, saying 'I would take you on the morrow, as the weather was so charming,' he gave me to understand it would injure you irreparably in the eyes of his cousin. Now consider seriously before you resolve."

Mary coloured very highly, but less from the mention of Theodore than from indignation towards Ivan for a *ruse* which she considered one of the old tricks by which he had proved the bane of all her family. As she also considered it another proof of his unhappy attachment to her person, she held absence to be necessary for all their sakes, and therefore observed that her prospects for the future were not bright enough to render her unmindful of the present, and, if he could spare her, she would go for a week or ten days, at all hazards.

"Thank you, dear Mary, for being firm. I have bought you a mantle and a hood, and Catherine a mantean. I could do no more; but you are both so pretty, the chief of Ostrokoï cannot be ashamed of you, though his house may be full of summer friends."

"I have the good father's present of last year in perfection, dear Alexander; besides, no one expects an exile to be well dressed."

"Such troubles as belong to personal appearance are, strictly speaking, perhaps, great weaknesses, and I think I am philosopher enough to despise them in my own person; for, though I have envied my dear friend Alexovitch his horse, yet I never did either his booshe or his vest. Nevertheless, Mary, it goes to my heart to see you in sheepskins, and it is when you are milking and churning I recollect my father was Prince of Ingria before either of us was born, and of course the change is affliction. I trust, however, these will be deemed merely passing vanities, purified by the affection with which they are combined."

"Or lessons of virtue, dear brother, showing us that even our virtues are so combined with our failings, they ought to lead to humility. Dear, excellent Brukenthal, shall we ever again hang on thy lips for instruction?"

CHAPTER XLIV.

ALEXANDER slept soundly, awoke refreshed, and, hoping his sister had done the same, did not hesitate to desire Katinzka would awake her for the purpose of proceeding to the Boyar's before the heat of the day came on.

This humble friend was a person of importance in her way, and it was in the first place necessary to propitiate her by entreating her stay until the return of the mistress of the

house, a plan to which she readily acceded, because she conceived herself to be, in fact, the cause of the movement; therefore, everything concerned moved with celerity. Mary was not well, for she had slept but little; nevertheless, she exerted herself to the utmost; and when out in the sweet morning air, with that most refreshing of all sights, a world of boundless green around her, and the memory of Ivan Dolgouruki being left behind her, she became renovated and equal to her journey. That unhappy man, after tossing through the whole night in the turmoil of various passions, slept when he should have awoke, and, favoured by the stillness, lay so far into the day, that our young friends had nearly completed their design when he became apprised of their intention.

Katinzka knew nothing beyond its having long been the intention of the princess to go, and believed that she had at last insisted upon her brother's attendance. Ivan saw in this that he had alarmed her; therefore, happily for them all, he determined to watch himself with even more than his past caution; and, as nothing could be extracted from Alexander on his return, because he knew nothing, he was content to render that amiable young man as uncomfortable as he could contrive, by throwing things wrong in their domestic routine, and ascribing the confusion to Mary's absence, at the time declaring "there could be no pleasure when Catherine did not cheer the scene with her merry laugh and her infantine gambols."

Still day after day passed on, and two other pedlers made their appearance, to the horror of Ivan and the trouble of Alexander, who really wanted the advice of his sister as to the future wants of the family, yet he would not be harassed into setting out for her to the abridgment of her health and pleasure. He was also extremely busy; and Ivan, necessitated to labour as well as his young master, had the advantage of finding that love and idleness could not be enjoyed in Siberia. By the same medium, fear was also dispelled; and, during the hay harvest, in which they were now engaged, he ceased to tremble at the sight of a fellow-creature, several of whom gladly assisted one whom all his neighbours sincerely loved and desired to benefit.

In the mean time, Mary was at least rendered as happy as the lady of the good Boyar could make her, and Catherine was in a state of such perfect felicity, every kind heart must of necessity sympathize with her. The worthy couple were thankful to hear of the coronation being celebrated at Moscow, because they doubted not that their son would be present, and that it placed him a fifth of the dreary way nearer to them; and, they pleased themselves with thinking that, having seen the grandest sight the world had ever witnessed, he would be inclined to relinquish all others, and return home immediately. More acute observers of human nature might have expected that the enjoyment of pleasure would give a taste for pleasure not likely to be soon satisfied; but, as they knew Alexovitch had hitherto found his highest gratification in the exercise of his affections, they expected he would continue to do so, and they were not wrong.

Mary had been with them ten days, and had often wished to see Alexander appear (for she found it altogether impossible to feel satisfied in a state of separation from one attached by so

many ties), when there was a universal confusion through the whole of that everlasting edifice, and it was announced that "Paul had arrived." Well might Paul's appearance cause a sensation, for he was one of the two servants who accompanied the young heir, and had been by him consigned to the command of Mr. Brunkenthal.

As this circumstance, together with every other which belonged to their setting out, had been repeatedly mentioned to Mary, she was more than commonly interested in the honest serf's arrival, and felt as if all her future fate, now more than ever eventful, hung on the news she was likely to receive, and was about to fly after the Boyar, when he entered the room with a letter in his hand. That its news was joyful could not be doubted, for he instantly walked up to his wife, kissed her affectionately, and said, "You are the mother of a knight of the order of St. Alexander Newsk. I give you joy of your son's preferment."

"But where is he? When may I see him again?"

"He is now at Moscow, and there is no saying when you will see him again, for I may add (since I shall not grieve our fair guest by the announcement) that there is a lady there by whose side he loves to linger, so far as I can make out; besides, it is plain that his sovereign looks on him with favour, and we cannot tear him from so many attractions."

"Most sincerely do I congratulate you on both accounts," said Mary, "and, indeed, on every present and future circumstance which can arise for the pleasure and benefit of your beloved Alexovitch, who well merits all which fortune or the empress can bestow. But surely he mentions our good Brunkenthal!"

"He does indeed mention him," said the Boyar, with a sigh.

"Is he ill? Was the journey too much for him?"

"Neither, neither! he bore it admirably; he exerted himself at Moscow to make money, which at Petersburgh he expended properly; introduced my son to Count Woronzow, went himself to court, and—and—but you shall see Paul; you shall question him as to what followed, for my son is in positive ignorance as to the matter."

"Matter—what matter!" Such was the agitation of Mary, that, when Paul made his appearance, not a single question could escape her lips.

"Tell us all you know respecting the good pastor; my son merely says he is in confinement."

"So he is, please your highness, but he has a palace for a prison; and the people tell me he never was half so well off in his life, for he has plenty of victuals all of the best, and books without number, which, they make account, he likes as well."

"What, is he then imprisoned!" cried Mary, in agony.

"Why to be sure it is a kind of a sort of an imprisonment," said Paul, "because neither master nor anybody else has ever seen him since he went down on his knees to the empress, and said something that made her cry, on which he was shut up all in a hurry, and nothing has been heard of him since save what I have got at times o' the servants; and, so far as I can

learn, the good gentleman has nothing to do but sleep and eat—only he must neither speak, nor write, nor be seen by anybody."

With this vague account poor Mary was compelled to be satisfied; but as it was one calculated to render her full of vain conjectures, which yet it was impossible to repress, and which were of a nature to cast a damp on the otherwise unmixed satisfaction of the Boyar's family, she entreated her kind friend to send her home, saying "she could not be happy till she had communicated to her brother the news she had received, especially that part which related to the welfare of Alexovitch."

As the good couple sincerely sympathized with her feelings, a litter was immediately provided for her and Catherine, there being very little night at this time, though the summer was nearly over. In consequence, she arrived at the cottage when all the family were asleep, but her return was too agreeable not to be hailed with rapture; and Alexander soon welcomed her bearers in the most hospitable manner in his power, and heard with pleasure of the honours bestowed by the empress on his young friend. Katinzka and Peter gladly assisted him, but Ivan kept out of sight, though he listened eagerly to every word that was spoken.

During the little journey Mary had made up her mind not to impart to Alexander the sad news which pressed heavy on her own heart, since the more she considered the matter the more puzzling it appeared to her, and she could not fail to see that Alexander must be as much at a loss for a solution to it as herself. It is hardly likely she would have kept her resolution, since every hour increased the pressure on her spirits, and we know how naturally we all seek the relief of sympathy in cases of suspense and solicitude; but her intention was frustrated by one of the men, who, in the moment of departure, said, "That as Paul had brought good news of the young Boyar, he trusted his fellow-servant would bring better of the old minister, whom they all loved so dearly, and prayed for constantly;" adding, "and he will be here in six weeks, as he will be sent home to give us an account of the coronation."

The word *better* alarmed Alexander, who had thought it strange that his sister should have travelled at so late an hour, and from his anxious inquiries the whole of poor Mary's burdensome story was soon elicited, Ivan now eagerly joining in his inquiries, as everything and every person had, of course, the deepest interest in his eyes, exclusive of his own hopes or fears for the future. Of that which they considered afflictive, the imprisonment of their dear friend, he thought little, saying, "the empress had merely prevented the old man from playing the fool once more, and setting out again for Siberia."

"Then you conclude she will not recall us?" said Mary; "yet Paul says she wept when Brunkenthal spoke; her tears must have flowed from pity, not anger, as the foolish man supposed."

"That is more than we know—women's minds run rapidly from one feeling to another, and from the kindest conclusion to the most vindictive intention: it is evident to me that there is nothing to hope for, and that the only consolation you have ever enjoyed is denied to you."

In his own mind Ivan did not believe this; on the contrary, he thought that the emotion ascribed to the empress proceeded from pity, which,

in the course of time, would be displayed ; and believed that it was probable the good man, pleased with his success, had ventured to suggest mercy to him, which had been rejected, and the petitioner punished, though lightly. He encouraged himself in the belief that liberation would not come during the present year, at all events ; and, since he was certain it would not come to him, most sincerely desired it might not arrive to them whose departure would increase the horrors of banishment tenfold. It is possible that on his first arrival, when gratitude alone possessed his mind towards his benefactors, he might have rejoiced in their liberation ; but love is a selfish passion, and, in the bosom of a selfish man, forbade even a glimmering of generous emotion.

It had, however, the effect of rendering him more desirous than ever of securing the scanty harvest, increasing the safety and provision for the animals, and assisting Alexander to secure fish and other creatures for winter-stores ; but so severely did the young man suffer from the turn affairs had taken, that he could scarcely rouse himself to action. He knew not till now how much he had expected ever since the outset of Brukenthal, though he had dwelt upon it in silence rather than mislead his sister or wound the feelings of his companion, for whom he could not reasonably suppose any effectual intercession could be made. His own hopes arose from the perfect innocence of himself and sisters in all that concerned the affairs of government ; but Ivan Dolgourouki, however he might pity him, was unquestionably punished as a criminal, and must continue to suffer until the empress held justice to be satisfied.

The deep despondency evinced by Alexander induced Mary to urge him to steal a day from his avocations and visit the Boyar, as a perusal of his son's letter (which would probably be submitted to him) would at least divert him from those sad thoughts which evidently were sinking his energies, and must incapacitate him from exertions absolutely necessary for them all. Every recollection of the last winter filled her with dread of the advancing one ; but no personal suffering was so appalling as the idea of that noble spirit being borne down, that young hope utterly quenched, which had hitherto been so conspicuous in her brother, and which she felt to be her own constant source of exertion and reward also. Eager to escape from the despair which every circumstance seemed to gather around her heart as if to crush it, and feeling as if a more inseparable bar than ever was placed between her and Theodore, she sought to meet him again in the only way possible, by borrowing his letters once more from Ivan, in order to read them during her brother's absence ; but she was now civilly but peremptorily refused, and to her dismay, and indeed horror, those precious documents, so inestimable in her sight, were thrust into the stove and consumed before her eyes.

Mary had always dreaded Ivan ; but she now added to that dread dislike of so decided a character, that she again felt his residence with them a source of misery she was ill prepared to endure. He made, it is true, many glozing speeches on the necessity of giving her this pain ; "since all hope of ever again seeing his cousin was now at an end, it was the part of wisdom to reconcile ourselves to circumstan-

ces ; that, although he had not endured the whole of a Siberian winter, he had experienced enough to show him the extent of its evils and enable him to bear it ; therefore, *she* who had borne so much might surely bear more : it was certain her worst trials were over ; the grave had closed upon the sorrows of her beloved parents ; the friend she had valued so highly was provided for, perhaps as happily as declining life admitted ; the child she loved so fondly was in high health and of exceeding loveliness ; her brother was strong to labour and of most amiable temper, and admirable both in principles and abilities ; and he possessed a friend, a most devoted friend, one who for *her* would think the sacrifice of wealth, rank, pleasure, life itself—"

"Stay, Count Ivan, stay," cried Mary, in great agitation ; "do not degrade yourself even in Siberia : time was you loved Theodore, and acted most honourably between him and his father. The remembrance of your generous conduct at that time has never failed in my eyes to cast a redeeming halo around your character, injurious as your influence has been on me and mine. I have remembered it when the very sound of your voice has been to me terrible as that of a demon—do not compel me to forget it. You must be aware that the daughter of Menzikoff can only tolerate your presence as the relation of Theodore."

"She may nevertheless find me useful, nay, positively necessary, should Alexander be recalled : think of your situation in such a case!"

Mary instantly saw that Ivan Dolgourouki believed that the mission of Brukenthal had sped, notwithstanding his affecting to deny it so positively ; and, as she gave him credit for understanding the puzzling and often crooked policy of courts far better than herself, it brought to her heart so much of hope that she could allow for that despair which prompted him to practise deceit, and endeavour at any hazard to secure himself a companion. As the thought rose to her mind, and gave her countenance a perplexed and troubled expression, he repeated the question, and added, in tones of the utmost humility and tenderness, that, if she were committed to his care, in the course of a few years Alexander might be enabled to secure the liberation of both ; whereas she would, as dowager empress, be so decidedly an object of envy to one (who, being a usurper, would always dread the usurpation of others), that he was convinced she had no possible chance for release.

"There can be no fear of me, for I am believed to be Ulrica, and I am willing to pass for Ulrica ; and, if recalled, will gladly retire until I can be received as a nun : even if Alexander were compelled to leave me, I should not be destitute, for the governor would appoint me a keeper, the Boyar would be my friend, and I may add, my property in this poor country would ensure me attention. God forbid that I should be tried by such a terrible loss as my invaluable brother ! but if I am, he will, I doubt not, support me under it. I have lived through so much, that I will not doubt my own power of sustaining more."

Ivan was extremely disconcerted by the calm tone she assumed, and which would have been impossible to her if she had for a moment believed that Alexander would have been taken from her, or that Ivan should have become

through any circumstance the arbiter of her future destiny. His eye was continually upon her, for he felt as if she were alone ; his eloquence and tears could not be withstood by one so gentle and so defenceless ; but Katinzka was always by her side, and, as he now feared that Alexander, when told of his conversation, would deem it right to discharge him, he affected to consider all which had passed as the idle badinage which an unhappy exile might adopt to while away an hour of misery.

" You have destroyed letters which would have solaced many hours of sorrow to an unhappy exile, made such by your wickedness, Count Ivan ! "

" Simply because they were injurious to her : hearts and hopes are unnecessary and injurious in Siberia, and the wise will abandon them as adding to their tortures."

Mary made no reply ; she well knew that in that poor cottage the holiest affections of the heart had been happily exercised, and the hopes of Heaven given happiness on earth, despite of the troubles of situation and the infirmities of nature. How much were the sorrows and anxieties of even Siberia increased to her ! What would she not have given to have beheld Brunkenthal in the place now occupied by Ivan Dolgourouki ! and how strange did it seem that the same man who had driven her from society should make solitude hateful to her ! that the serpent, whose winding coils had crushed her in the palace, should poison her in the cottage ?

Scheme after scheme rose to her mind for relieving herself of the presence of Ivan, but were quickly dismissed in consequence of the actual fear of his power which still hung over her. She could scarcely forbear to think he still held some mysterious, indefinable, but positive influence in the Russian court, and, strong as her mind had proved itself in bearing up so bravely against the tempest, she now sunk under a superstitious belief like that of the evil eye, and almost conceived the handsome and elegant Ivan Dolgourouki, the accomplished courtier, who had lifted his eyes to royal beauty, a personification of the great principle of evil.

Never had the step of Alexander been so welcome as now ; and, though he entered weary and hungry, Mary was not slow to perceive that his countenance had lost much of its despondency, so that it appeared as if his hopes were rekindled, or his resolution strengthened ; and, after a time (seeing that Ivan did not depart, but sat in dogged silence, as if waiting an opportunity for satirical remark or covert insult), she ventured to say, " Have you seen Alexovitch's letter ? "

" I have read it twice over, and found all as you said, save one little bit, just under the seal, which to me was worth all the rest ten times over."

" What could it be ? "

" These words : ' Tell Alec, Count Woronzow has seen his black foxskin, the fox we ferreted out under the low rock, being sewed on the Czarina's coronation robe.' Now, what do you think of that ? Is it not a proof that she has accepted it, and that she will remember me by-and-by ? "

" It is a proof that you are an excellent shot, have sold good skins, and that the empress knows what is good," said Ivan, in a caustic tone.

" Well, the Boyar thinks as I do, and is sorry he could not decipher these words before. I am quite sure our good friend *gave*, not *sold*, that particular skin to the empress, and I am determined to believe she will remember us and recall us. We can have no enemies at court now, you know."

Alexander spoke without any allusion to the past ; but, seeing the countenance of Ivan, with his usual good-nature he was about to apologize, when Mary interrupted him by saying,

" If, brother, you do not suffer your hopes for the future to interfere with your present labours in providing for winter, I cannot help thinking it is well to entertain them, even if you are disappointed for the next seven years ; but Count Ivan has suggested the possibility of your being recalled *alone*. Had such a thought ever entered your mind ? "

" Never, Mary ! *never* : in fact, I would not leave you for the world. I promise to be a voluntary inhabitant in Siberia to my last breath, rather than abandon you. I believe that, even had you married Alexovitch, I could not have parted from you ; but now, oh, Mary ! your own heart tells you the thing is impossible. Count Ivan has little idea of the bonds which unite brethren in Siberia : our hearts do not freeze, if our fingers do."

Mary could not forbear to cast a triumphant look towards Ivan (for she had felt assured he underrated Alexander when he had so cruelly harassed her a few hours before), but so wretched did he now appear, so beseechingly did his eyes entreat her to spare him, that she did not say a single word which could irritate the feelings of her brother, or add to the misery of the count. It was enough that her reliance on the one was strengthened, and her expectations increased, even by the evident fears of the other.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE next morning Alexander urged Peter to labour with more than his wonted industry in all points connected with their farm, as if to prove that he had imbibed no false notion of his situation, but was determined to make all possible preparation, not only for winter, but a long and severe one. He had always acted with great delicacy towards Ivan, who had, in general, been much on the alert, and really of great use, but who now appeared indolent, and frequently, in a cold and scornful, though quiet manner, would observe, " it was foolish for one on the eve of emancipation to toil so severely."

Provoked at length, Alexander said one day, after their usual dinner, which was taken about noon, " Surely it is both foolish and unkind, Count Ivan, to reproach me for entertaining hope for the future, which animates me to the performance of duties for the present. You have never once heard me say that I expected release this year or next, though the innocence of my conduct, and the justice of my cause, might surely excuse my thoughts wandering in that direction. I may, perhaps, have said too much of my prowess as a hunter ; but, remember, I am only eighteen, and I am the son of a man you acknowledge to have been brave and active, qualities which our dear pastor said made all men somewhat vainglorious. Besides, where

is the man that would not be thankful by any possible medium to contribute to the benefit of my sisters!—one all beauty and goodness, the other all innocence and sweetness."

"There are few persons of your age with so little of the fault you speak of as yourself, Alexander," replied Ivan Dolgourouki, in an altered tone; "and, if I seek to check your expectations, it is only because I know better what belongs to courts than yourself, and cannot bear that you should suffer from self-deception. Innocence and merit are so far from being pleas to favour, that they are reasons against bestowing it, because they imply power in the possessor, and the active, clever owner of a crown concentrates all power in his own person; nor can I blame him; still less can I censure the same spirit in a female, for it is natural that her demands for personal admiration should be added to her love of rule."

"You look only on the dark side of things, Count Ivan. Peter the Great loved power, because he required it to effect lofty purposes; yet he delegated it freely to my father, because he saw in him a worthy instrument of assistance: his widow, who was surely a beautiful woman, was equally liberal, and I have no right to doubt the present empress having some good points in her character."

"Brother, brother, don't be talking," cried Catherine, rushing into the cottage, followed by Peter; "come here, and look at a big litter, and one, two, oh! many a man."

"Master, master, I knew it would be so; he said it would, and he was always right," was heard in the voice of the serf.

Ivan was near the little window: he looked out, and became blanched by terror as he exclaimed, "The mines! the mines!"

"No, no," cried Peter, in an exulting tone, "men go to the mines in fetters, and are guarded by foot-soldiers; these are on horseback, and our own keeper pointing out the way. Master knows I said long since they would die thousands of versts from hence. I, Peter Peff, said it when I begged for the empty grave—and why did I say it, but because the good prince felt that God himself put it in his heart."

"Peace, fellow! the wagon is coming here, indeed. Oh, Theodore, are you too banished, and for my fault! Now may they take me when they will."

Mary and Alexander, though trembling exceedingly, rushed to the door, and stood silent and almost senseless with surprise and solicitude. In a few moments, their guardian, with an air of the most joyous gratulation, had pointed out the young man to the officer, on which the stranger presented to him the firman of the empress, commanding "Alexander Menzikoff and his sisters Ulrica and Catherine to surrender themselves to Lieutenant Paul Chichekoff, to be by him conducted to the presence of her majesty, at her residence in the Kremlin at Moscow."

The light forsook the eyes of the dazzled yet transported youth, but he felt that the sense of the command was gracious, and rushed to the arms of Mary; they wept for joy, so overpowering in its suddenness that it might never have entered their minds as a possibility till now, much as, in fact, it had occupied them. There was a kind of terror mingled with their thankfulness; the gift seemed too vast for their com-

prehension, too valuable for them to grasp and to rely on; it seemed as if a flood was pouring on the parched throat, that was only capable of receiving a stinted stream.

Their conductor was a man of feeling, but his perceptions were limited, and his orders strict; and, long before either of our liberated exiles could utter a word to each other, or address those thanks to the Most High which were swelling in their bosoms, he said to Alexander,

"Your highness will excuse my saying that my orders were peremptory; you must depart immediately, and be all dressed in the regular sheepskins of the country, exactly resembling those originally provided for you."

As the parties were not thus arrayed at present, because the winter had not yet set in, it was evident that beyond the few minutes necessary for adopting this change they must not remain; but at this moment Katinzka, with the ready wit of a woman in a dilemma, advancing, said hastily,

"Good officer, yourself and your men must be fed, and his highness's cottage can yet provide both for man and beast. I am a soldier's widow, and can cook quickly. Come, Peter, Peter, let us bestir ourselves."

Thus roused to consider their situation, and ever alive to the voice of humanity, both brother and sister instinctively recollected Ivan Dolgourouki in his overwhelming fears, and the actual misfortune their removal must be to him. Alexander, therefore, led the officer into the cottage, and, seizing the arm of Ivan as he was darting into the chamber, said, in a low voice, "Do not excite attention by betraying fear; you are unknown to all but the keeper, who regards you only as my servant; no one will injure you if you do not injure yourself; try to seem busy by feeding the soldiers' horses."

Ivan obeyed mechanically in the first instance, for his faculties were as bewildered as those of his friend had been; but he soon became sensible that it would be wise in him to appear indifferent to what was passing, and abstain from presenting his name or memory in contact with that of Menzikoff, and he hastened out, thankful to escape eyes which might have seen him before in the circles of royalty, but were not likely to recollect him in sheepskins.

Mary was kneeling at the tomb of her parents, and in broken accents now pouring out her thanks to God, now bidding an eternal adieu to those blessed remains still hallowed in her eyes, and connected with all the most affecting and afflicting incidents of her unfortunate life. Most earnestly did she desire to have spent hours in this seclusion, but she knew her duty forbade, and she was compelling herself to rise, when she heard the words "Forgive, forgive!" whispered close to her ear, and, starting, saw Ivan kneeling beside her.

"It was not well, Count Ivan, to intrude on such a moment as this."

"It was not, but misery like mine cannot stand on forms: do not injure me with Theodore; forget all I have dared to urge; remember only the miserable are rarely very wise or very good."

"I am not vindictive, and at such a moment as this I cannot retain anger or suffer from fear; therefore, depend upon it, you will find no enemy in me; do not detain me another moment."

She flew past him, ascended the chamber,

which had so often witnessed her tears, and found Katinka dressing little Catherine in her rugged garments, to her great annoyance, as she had a little milk-white kid in her arms, which she insisted on carrying with her. In a very short time Mary herself was equipped, and had bestowed all her own little stock of clothing on her kind assistant, whom she charged with innumerable remembrances to the good Boyar and his sweet lady. Just as she stepped down where the men were taking a parting glass, Alexander thus addressed Ivan, whom he had called from the little chapel.

"Ivan, before I depart, I present to you, in the presence of your good guardian, and in the belief that he will guarantee the possession to you, those excellent firearms which have been of so much use to myself; also my cattle and goats, and the furniture of this cottage: you will find or make a well-stored cellar before winter, I doubt not. To Peter I give my sheep and my horse, as he grows old, and needs one; my excellent fishing-tackle I give to our keeper, whom I request to see my faithful Peter buried in our sepulchre. In this house I trust he will both live and die."

In the language of Holy Writ, it might be truly said, Peter "lifted up his voice and wept," for he was at once delighted with the blessing bestowed on his young master and her he deemed his angel mistress, and distressed in the extreme by the pain of parting with them. Perhaps there was yet a severer pang experienced than all beside in losing the beautiful child, who had delighted in being carried in his strong arms, and who was now fondly stroking his beard, and calling him her dear old Peter, who fed her lambs, and gathered her cranberries, and who must follow poor Catherine, or she should cry.

The officer gave Mary his arm to conduct her to the wagon, which, on account of the inequalities of the ground, was obliged to stand at some distance from the cottage, and which was now surrounded by every creature belonging to the village which had the power of walking thither; and though all *said* they rejoiced, the women were weeping, and the men condoling each other. All felt alike a sense of loss in the kindness and benevolence, the good advice, the patient attention, the sympathizing tenderness, and the holy lessons they had each, at one time or other, received from some member of a family which they honoured and loved in every branch, but lauded most highly in the person of the departed. Of course, Aishey and Katinka held themselves especially privileged to mourn; and, though the parting kiss of the princess was a consoling honour, it was likewise a touching one, and Mary herself was utterly overpowered by her feelings.

It had been Ivan's earnest wish to wait upon her to the last moment, but the officious subaltern defeated his intention; yet, at this moment, his feelings would not be repelled; therefore he rushed forward, and, lifting her up in his arms, carried her to the wagon, and placed her carefully on the comfortable seats which had been provided; then, conscious that his action might draw remark, he took Catherine out of Peter's arms, and placed her also within. The poor man looked surprised and grieved, and the child grumbled, for she had dropped the kid in the flutter of the moment.

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"You are very good, Count Ivan," said Mary, "but must add to your services by telling Peter to come to the carriage."

As the old man drew nigh, Mary leaned forward, and, putting both hands out of the carriage, she said, "Peter, give me your hands; you were the first person in this country to whom I spoke, and you shall be the last. I will esteem and thank you, as long as I live; and those who are good to you, Peter, will never fail to be respected by me. I give you this little book of prayers to keep for my sake, not doubting but Aishey, or some other friend (perhaps Count Ivan), will read it for you."

As Mary spoke, she looked confidently towards Ivan; he felt and bowed in the lowliness of a heart breaking with various sorrows, and, as yet, untaught to seek for their only consolation. Just then Alexander seized his hand, wrung it, and jumped into the wagon, which instantly set out with celerity.

The little crowd moved off in the same track, keeping the vehicle in their sight as long as it was possible. Ivan looked like a statue, gazing in the same direction, pale, gaunt, and frozen, the impersonation of despair. Peter was on his knees, his hands clinched, his face turned up to heaven, huge round tears gathering in his eyes, and rolling slowly down his furrowed cheeks and grizzly beard, while his tongue incessantly repeated, "Glory to God for his blessing to his servants, but Peter has lost them all—*lost them all!* the sheep are good sheep, the horse a good horse, but what can they say to Peter?"

"Go home, honest man, go home," said Ivan, who wished to be alone.

"Not yet, not yet," sobbed Peter; "she taught me to pray, and I will pray for her; had she done as much for you, we would have knelt together."

Ivan turned on his heel and walked slowly towards the coppice, convinced he was the most injured of human beings, at once desiring to set his heel on the neck of Peter and crush out his ignoble soul, and determining so to act towards the reptile serf that Mary should tender him her thanks, and seek his liberation in return for his kindness. Sorrow, mortification, vindictive rage, and chilling despair by turns flitted through his bosom, in which a sense of hopeless love rested as the predominant feeling. "Had she not been sent for at that express moment, surely she had listened to his suit; her parting look bespoke her pity; and at one time he had won her confidence, and rendered her sensible of the efficacy of his services, the qualities of his mind. Alas! that was only when he spoke of Theodore, to whom every hour was now conducting her."

Long did he wander, compelled to shrink from the future, and abhor remembrance of the past; but the present, at length, induced him to return, for the breeze of evening was that of Siberia, and its whisper told of the winter which was hastening to envelop him in all its horrors. Cold and comfortless, he returned to his cottage, and in an authoritative tone commanded Katinka to prepare his supper, and Peter to replenish the stove.

"I have done my duty for the night, and a heavy heart wants sleep," said the serf, turning round in the corner where he had stretched himself.

"While you fetch some wood, I will get you some food," said the female, "because it is the last kind office I can do you. Before you wake, I shall be four or five versts on my way homeward."

"Homeward! You cannot mean to leave me, Katinzka?"

"I mean nothing else, depend upon it, Count Ivan. This is not a place for anybody to winter in used to our sheltered valley and warm mansion, to say nothing of the comfort of half a hundred fellow-servants to talk with. I came here by command of my lady; I have fulfilled her bidding, and I return to my own regular service about her person."

"But here you will be your own mistress, Katinzka, and I will give you—"

"Give me! Lord help you, man, I would not take even yourself as a gift; no, I would not marry you for the wide, wide world; every time the wind blew loud, I should think the devil was coming for his own, and might take me along with you by mistake. I am very superstitious in dark weather; and, now the good are all gone, I should fancy the old prince sat night and day in that chair, with his white beard and silky locks, his bright eyes and his feeble hands turning over the leaves of his Bible."

As the good woman spoke, she shuddered, and put her hand over her eyes, as if sensible she had raised the apparition she feared. Ivan would have ridiculed her fears, but he was weary and hungry, and only felt that a new and unforeseen source of trouble was added to the evils before him. Peter, "the log Peter," was the only human being to whom he could speak, and even he would not obey him; and who could say that, in such circumstances, his own mind would not become weak, and be haunted by horrible phantoms! The bones of Menzikoff were indeed near him, the wrongs of Menzikoff were continually pressing on his memory—his conscience. If, indeed, the spirits of the murdered could revisit earth, and gaze on their destroyers, what more likely than that Menzikoff should seek to appal the enemy who had pursued him and his family to death and destruction, especially when he dwelt in the very spot that had witnessed his long sufferings and received his latest breath?

A new day, and the exertions it must call for, would doubtless restore the powers of Count Ivan for the present, though the words of Katinzka might often, in the howling night, and the long dark day, recur to him. She had fulfilled her intention, and departed some time before he rose; and henceforth silence, which appeared palpable, rested on that cheerless habitation, which so lately rejoiced in the gentle reasonings of Mary, the spirited relations of Alexander, and the innocent laugh of Catherine: this was, indeed, to drink the poisoned chalice which imbibers exile, and be, in all its severest sense, banished to Siberia.

CHAPTER XLVI.

For a considerable time the wagon trotted merrily on which bore our exiled family towards that native country all hold so dear, for the ground was dry, the short grass was unbroken

by impediments, and the horses refreshed. But astonishment still sat on the lips of the elder travellers, producing silent thanksgiving, now and then interrupted by a kindly remembrance of the cottage, or, rather, of the creatures connected with it, and a reverential affection for the bones of those beloved ones who hallowed it.

With the child, all that belonged to her late home was matter of lamentation, for she had no recollection of any other, and her many questions induced them to experience what might be called the reality of the change they experienced; and Mary confessed to herself that, such had been the overwhelming nature of the surprise, she had even forgotten Theodore more completely than at any period previous to their parting. In recovering her usual train of thought, she felt more happy than she had done before, yet she wept abundantly, and Alexander wept with her, as if his overburdened spirit could only thus gain the power to be thankful and happy.

Exhausted nature found refuge in sleep; and, when the relays of horses were obtained, the officer, seeing their situation, pushed on for another stage, well knowing that the roads, even in this best of all seasons, would soon become very trying to the females, and they had got two stages beyond Berenzof before he sought for the rest required for himself and his men.

The post-house where they stopped was so miserable a place that they were earnestly advised to remain in the wagon, which was also entered by their guide, as a far more comfortable resting-place than the suffocating post-house, which Mary shuddered to recollect as the spot where the pestilence had been caught by her family. When they set forward again, she became anxious to see the face of the country and recall places to her mind, but both Alexander and herself found scarcely one view that appeared in the least like that which dwelt on their memory. In one case they had met the terrible winter of the country, increasing in its horrors; in the other, they were pursuing the beauties of summer, which, although fading in fact, appeared to them increasing in fertility every verst, and giving to their young hearts the promise of happiness eagerly grasped, but yet existing in a form undefined and indistinct, an enchanting promise rather than an existing good.

On the third day, no care on the part of their driver could preserve them from those terrible pitches they well remembered enduring on their former journey, and therefore, when the child was satisfied to remain with her pet kid, the brother and sister walked within little distance of the vehicle, and were thus enabled to enjoy each other's conversation, which was apt to fall on the sufferings their dear mother had experienced on the same route, though neither could remember whether she had advanced thus far into the country they were leaving. When, however, they stopped for the night, both recollecting that in that post-house her corpse had been confined, and that here they had received all possible attention from the poor inhabitants around, and Alexander first felt the evils of that poverty under which it seemed he was doomed to labour for the rest of his existence. The joyous expression of his countenance vanished as he exclaimed, "Alas! Mary, we have nothing

to give them, and how soon shall we find that we have nothing for ourselves!"

"We can thank them, and rejoice their kind hearts by proving that we are now returning. I greatly prefer sleeping in the wagon, but I will certainly go in, though I fear the place is full of men who may be drinking."

The late terrible winter had proved fatal to the man and his wife who were the former inhabitants, but the young woman they found there well remembered Mary, and hastened to show her a little article which had been part of the dress of the Princess Menzikoff, and given to her by Ulrica in reward for her attentions on that eventful night. How gladly would Mary now have purchased this riband—how fully did she enter into the feelings of Alexander!

"The men that are now coming in," said the hostess, "are those who are come to make the thing they call the monument for the grand lady who died about six versts below; they are good customers to us, for the prince who sent them is a bountiful master to his serfs."

"A monument to my mother!" cried Mary, in great agitation; "this is the work of Theodore Dolgourouki."

"Yes, that's the name, sure enough, as the master builder, who is now coming in, will tell you."

Mary could not address this person, but Alexander did, and learned with a sensation of the most lively gratitudo that the intention mentioned in his letters by Theodore was at this very time being fulfilled. He was told that a very simple inscription would dedicate the monument "to the memory of the Princess Menzikoff, who died near that place, on her road to Siberia;" the prince having observed that "comments on her journey must entail infamy on his own name, and he was inadequate to any description of her virtues."

"Excellent, excellent Theodore," cried Mary; "the world has not changed you, and while you are in it we can never want a friend: place me in the wagon, brother, that I may have the liberty of praising him unwitnessed."

But it was not so easy for Alexander to quit the rural architect employed on this memorable erection, for he was a young man of ability and good feeling, and delighted to meet in such a garb one so intelligent as the young stranger, and who, on revealing his name, became so interesting. Mary had, therefore, the power of soliloquizing on the virtues and endearing qualities of her long-loved Theodore till morning, when the officer acceded to their wishes of hastening to the monument, whither the builder gladly accompanied them.

The first glance Mary cast on the stones which were dedicated to this hallowed purpose made her earnestly desire to alight and fly towards them, but this her brother resisted, saying, "No, dear Mary, I will go first, for my claims supersede yours. I never was parted a day from my mother for my whole life; I was her only son, and received her daily instructions; her last words were addressed to me; she bade me obey you, and I have done so till now, Mary—have I not?"

"You have been worthy of her indeed, my brother: go and receive in the edifice that honours your mother the freedom to which manhood and circumstances entitle you; henceforward I promise to obey you."

Alexander jumped from the wagon, and was concealed from every eye within the little tower which constituted the principal part of the unfinished edifice; for some minutes not a sound was heard save the half-suppressed sobs of poor Mary; but at length the officer gave his hand to her, the builder lifted little Catherine to the ground, and they proceeded to view the monument.

The morning was glowing beneath an autumnal sun; the air was pure and refreshing; and an open country, vast and sublime as the ocean, was around them. Alexander took the clasped hands of Mary in his own, led her within the sacred enclosure, and, by the waving of his hand and the motion of his eye, seemed to accept the peace and the sunshine which reigned over all, as a happy augury for the future.

"It is, indeed, a contrast to that most terrible day when we lost her," said Mary; "but we will not look back at a time when Providence opens a promise of good before us so much beyond our hopes: let us thank this kind and sensible young man for the pains he is taking."

It was by few words that the deeply-affected son could express the mingled feelings which overpowered him, but they were gratefully accepted and well remembered by the artist, who long stood leaning against the building as the little cavalcade wound away in the distance, every eye gazing on the monument in the wilderness, devoted to the name of their idolized mother.

Catherine alone could talk on this day, and even she, poor child, had a sense of sorrow on her mind she could neither account for nor elude; it was so far well that it checked her speaking of Count Ivan, who was her most general subject (because she pitied him much more than Peter, who was always happy with the sheep); and it must be supposed that, under the influence of those emotions so powerfully awakened, the name of their mother's destroyer could not be tolerated.

The empress had been so considerate for the feelings which might be supposed to affect the minds of the exiles as to command that they should return by way of Pultava, and rest there for a week, thereby affording them time to inspect the scene of their father's most momentous success, and of the ruin of Russia's greatest foe. This permission was thankfully received, and produced the excitement, the exultation, and also the pain, so natural to the hearts of children called upon to the contemplation of a beloved father's glories, and led thence to his sufferings. As, however, they had not been permitted to alter their dress, and it formed a portion of the ignominy inflicted on their father, and their persons were too remarkable even under that disguise to escape observation, they soon became desirous of having their term of rest abridged, for Pultava was a gay town, full of soldiers, and it was every day more necessary to their comfort to arrive at the end of their wearisome journey.

The more they advanced into the populous part of their country, the more anxious they naturally became as to the situation it was intended by the empress they should occupy. Alexander exceedingly disliked the idea of going into the army, but he feared he should be provided with a commission as the means of bread for himself and sisters, though each of them had

claims on the crown for support. Mary looked forward with better hopes as respected her subsistence, for she knew that Theodore's friend had secured her from want, but she dreaded a degradation which might place her below the situation required for the wife of an ancient Knezer's descendant. The father of Theodore was as much an object of fear to her as Ivan had been; and as one of her first sources of satisfaction on her recall had arisen from removal far from him, so did she experience, in a lesser degree, fear of encountering his relation.

These and many other sources of solicitude gave way, as proofs of a fruitful and beautiful country appeared around them; and in passing through a considerable part of the Ukraine, they were never wearied of gazing on the cornfields and orchards, chatting, when occasion served, to the peasantry, and expatiating on the prosperity of the country, the blessings of society, and their own peculiar sense of its enjoyment; and much as there really might be in their state to fear or to desire, they felt for the present that they could never be again unhappy if permitted to remain in their own country.

With all the advantages of travelling they had enjoyed, yet eight long weeks had passed when they drew near to Moscow; and they well knew that snow had long hurtled in the air, and that piercing winds blew round their late cottage, for symptoms of winter were gathering around them even here. It was evening, but not dark, when they arrived in the precincts of Moscow, and as horses were procured without difficulty, and the roads good, they now pushed on rapidly, and their hearts beat almost audibly with the anxieties inevitable at such a period. "Where was their dear Brukenthal? Should they be welcomed by one to whom they owed so much? Was the empress still kindly inclined to them, or had the cares of her station rendered them of less value in her sight, and would she neglect to foster what she had designed to save?" were questions passing both their minds continually, yet in Mary's was one paramount to all, "Where is Theodore? and can he still love me, altered as I must be?"

In the course of their journey, Alexander had been frequently struck by the calmness and confidence evinced by Mary when she looked forward to the future, friendless and impoverished as they were, remembering how gentle were her manners, how timid by nature, and how long her enforced solitude had lasted, and the glances he occasionally gained of her troubled countenance at the present awful crisis afflicted him exceedingly. Recollecting that they might soon be parted, and not knowing whether a palace or a prison was before them, he seized the opportunity of assuring her that no circumstance in future life would ever be capable of shaking his esteem for Theodore Delgourouki, who was probably a sharer in the disgrace of Ivan, however innocent of his faults; and he added, passionately, "Surely, surely, I shall never be drawn into the vortex of ambition, never belong to any party, or seek to rise above others; perhaps I am about to enter on a scene of trial, of temptation, to which I am unequal, and you, dear Mary, tremble for me."

"No, my dear Alexander, for you I have no fears, and not many for Theodore; since his innocence must be apparent to all. You will never engage in the crooked paths of politics,

because your principles and your taste alike lead you to far different pursuits. I trust you will live long and happily in Moscow, and die amid your children's children. For myself, should I become the wife of an exile, since I know the worst, there would not be much to fear, for I have learned to labour and to submit."

"Ah! Mary, we are now in Moscow; once more in our dear father's native city, which he loved so well. How numerous are the domes and spires which glisten in the lamplight! and now we are passing lines of gardens. How I love a garden! not all we have seen in our everlasting journeyings of fields and forests delight me like a garden."

Alexander ceased to speak, for Mary had no power to reply; and, in truth, little Catherine was the only person in a state of felicity, every succeeding object of grandeur and novelty transporting her with delight, which was increased when, at length, they reached the Kremlin; for within its magnificent circle of palaces and cathedrals, an artificial day was supplied by innumerable lamps, giving to every object that air of joy and splendour communicated by an illumination meant for the celebration of a victory or other public rejoicing.

Coaches and britzcas, containing persons about the court magnificently dressed; officers in uniform, glittering with gold, now passed near them in rapid succession, and compelled them to remember the extraordinary and degraded spectacle they must present to persons of this description, and each unconsciously drew the coarse boosho of Siberia more closely over their sheepskin jerkins and trousers. Mary trusted that the empress, with a woman's kindly consideration, would give orders and attendance for the refreshment of the bath, and the comfort of decent clothing before she was admitted to the Presence; but Alexander feared that his garb of servitude was meant to be retained upon him as the memento of his father's original state. The child alone was unconscious of shame, and the rose paled not on her innocent cheek; but even she seemed awestruck by the tall buildings and the passing sentinels, and spoke to her sister or her kid only in a whisper.

After many turnings, their useful though humble vehicle drew up at a small door in the gable end of one of the ancient palaces; and the young officer, to whose kind attentions they had been uniformly indebted during their long journey, led them into a small room, and bade them a hasty but most respectful adieu, saying he must not lose a moment in announcing their arrival to his superior.

A small lamp, which stood on a low table, showed the place to which they were thus consigned as gloomy, though not large, and almost without furniture; if it had not been so near the outer door, and devoid of bolts and bars, they might have thought it a prison; but a second thought would have shown it as a spot where sentinels might rest, or beggars receive alms.

Sometimes the sound of music pierced the thick walls for a moment, and this circumstance, combining with the arrival of company without, and the general appearance of splendour they had witnessed, induced them to conclude that the empress was giving a ball, which in some measure engaged even the lowest of her

vast retinue, and that probably they would be entirely forgotten till morning. Catherine, no longer amused, became weary and hungry, with difficulty forbearing to cry; and scarcely could Mary muster a smile to cheer poor Alexander, who was evidently drooping; and it was only by whispers and gesticulation that either party could make known their fears or feelings to the other; a kind of mysterious awe, arising from their inhospitable reception, fell upon them as a tangible weight, crushing the spirits, and substituting the anguish of fear for the expectations of hope.

At length the door was slowly opened by a ponderous and pompous personage, whom Mary thought she recollects as a gentleman in attendance on the Empress Catherine, although he now laboured under a considerable addition of corpulence and consequence. After a long and cautious survey of their figures, he addressed Alexander:

"Are you the persons brought by Lieutenant Chichekoff from Siberia?"

"We are."

"Follow me."

Happily, their conductor did not hurry them, for his breath was short, and he had many steps to ascend, and passages to traverse that appeared almost interminable; and, on reaching the end of one, they were ordered to leave their cloaks. Mary now hung heavily on the arm of her brother, and the child clung in terror to her sister's jacket. Every moment the former trusted that she should be consigned to the females of the household, for, to her great dismay, it was found that they were approaching the place whence sounds of festivity had reached them when below, and in which both music and dancing were heard; and she was trying to make a request to that purpose, when a door was pushed open, and they were commanded to enter a room blazing with lights and glittering ornaments—indiaj jewels, hangings enriched with gold, and whatever Eastern luxury could assign to the boudoir of female royalty.

On every side were tall mirrors multiplying their own *outré* figures and coarse garments, but they had not the pain of meeting any eyes than these of each other. While they were alike wondering to what their position would lead, the music near them ceased, and in another moment a door they had not seen was opened, and a lady richly attired, and with a countenance replete with joy and benevolence, entered the room:

"Oh! how beautiful!" cried Catherine, clapping her little hands, on which Alexander drew her suddenly back, while Mary, stepping forward, fell prostrate at the lady's feet, saying only "My gracious sovereign!"

The empress drew back, advanced again, looked long and earnestly in the fair, pale face turned beseechingly towards her, and said,

"You are the daughter of Menzikoff—you are indeed like him."

"I am his daughter, my liege. This young man is his only son; this child the little one to whom—"

"Good God! the voice is also that of the young empress. Rise, take off that hideous coif, and let me see your hair."

Mary arose, threw off the wool bonnet, and drew out the boskin, around which her long, silky, curling tresses had been wound, the last

three years, saying, at the same time, in a low but distinct voice,

"Your majesty sees before you Mary Menzikoff, the betrothed of the late emperor. Poor Ulrica died of the smallpox; which I had in the palace, where I was honoured with your friendship."

"My poor girl! my dear sufferer!" cried the empress, clasping her arms around and eagerly kissing her, "it must be so—there is no denying it; yet you have ruined my romance; had you arrived sooner, perhaps you had ruined my accession."

"Not so, madam," said Mary, with seriousness not devoid of dignity; "for to me royalty brought misery only from first to last; and thus, madam, I divest myself of its only relic, resigning the gift of the crown to the crown."

In so saying, she unclasped the diamond necklace, so long unseen, from her neck, and presented it to the empress, who, hastily wiping her eyes, exclaimed,

"Is it possible that these jewels have once more come to light? We knew they were in Peter's possession, and always believed Ivan Dolgourouki had got hold of them. In that respect it appears we wronged the wretch."

"The emperor himself clasped them round my neck when he parted with me, and had undoubtedly arranged everything for my banishment."

"They were then given as a salvo to his conscience. They have been of little use to you, my poor Mary, in Siberia."

"Ivan Dolgourouki was certainly ignorant of their appropriation, madam."

"True, my good girl; but he does not the less remain where he is. I know your heart would plead for him, bad as he has been; but that which you, as a private Christian, ought to forgive, a Christian empress ought to punish. Enough! Gather up your tresses, never more to be so disgraced. We now speak to your brother."

Alexander knelt before his sovereign, who looked with an inspecting and gratified air upon those features which greatly resembled his mother's, when, suddenly recollecting herself, she gave him her hand to kiss, saying,

"You are studious, Alexander, and can do me much good by examining and correcting our barbarous code of laws. I therefore wish you to reside near Moscow, in order that you may examine the archives, and have the advantage of libraries. I also know that you are a good shot; and it is well that a studious man should at times participate in country sports; therefore I endow you with one seventh part of your late father's property, which will include the estate near Pozeczk. For this sweet babe," continued the empress, taking the muffled hand of Catherine, "what can I say, but that, from this night, I receive her as my dear, especial charge."

"I will give you my own kid, lady, you are so pretty. I call her Siberia, because she is white like snow. But Catherine is so sleepy."

The empress clapped her hands, and the attendant already mentioned appeared.

"Conduct Prince Menzikoff to the bath. Furnish him with clothes suitable for his rank, and with whatever he requires."

Alexander retired, after exchanging a look with his beloved sister at once expressive of his

approbation of her and his gratitude to the empress. He led Catherine and her four-footed friend away, and it is unnecessary to say that the flattering attention, the absolute servility, with which he was supplied with every luxury and comfort, far exceeded the coldness of his first reception.

"Mary," said the empress when they were alone, "I have many a sorrowful story to listen to from your lips; have you no questions which mine can answer? Your heart, I trust, did not become all ice in Siberia!"

"Oh, no, my gracious sovereign, for it is now aching with anxiety for the fate of a good man named Brukenthal."

"He is perfectly well, and shall have the satisfaction of telling you so himself the moment you have got out of those hideous casings. I confined him, and even deprived him of the pleasure he would have received from knowing I had sent for you, lest he should communicate his expectation to another, whom I desired to surprise, and, what is more, to charm, by the appearance of Ulrica, whom I remembered as a very lovely girl, greatly resembling you. Can you form any idea for whom I thus designed my *protégée*?"

"It must—it could be only Theodore Dolgorouki; and yet—"

"And yet he is the kinsman of Ivan, you would say. True; but light and darkness, truth and falsehood, mercy and cruelty, are not more opposite. Oh! Mary, that blush becomes you well; it casts a lustre even on—"

As the empress spoke, she vanished through the door by which she entered, and in less than a minute the sound of music and dancing was again heard, to the surprise of the bewildered traveller, who thought that the royal hostess had again joined the circle. Soon, however, she was sensible that a man was approaching; and, trusting it was the good pastor, she started forward, ready to throw herself upon his bosom. But lo! the empress and a noble cavalier of the court were before her; disappointed and confused, she retreated, covering her face with her hands.

"I have drawn you from a gay scene to a grave duty, my good prince," said the Czarina. "Behold this stranger! she appears a savage of the desert, yet seeks to palm herself upon us as the dowager-empress—as Mary Menzikoff. Remove her hands, examine her hair, her eyes—speak to her, Prince Theodore—she shall be forgiven or condemned from your sentence."

"It is Mary! my own Mary! given from the grave."

"Not so, but given from Siberia, the region of death. May her present resurrection be to all earthly happiness!"

* * * * *

The empress left the long-parted lovers to themselves, and the reader will be willing to follow her august example; nevertheless, many a young and tender heart will follow each party through the details of their many sorrows, and some fair girls sympathize with a princess in sheepskins, thus suddenly exhibited to one on whom the brightest eyes in Russia had that very night been gazing.

A summer day in Siberia would have been far too short for their sorrowful details, their interesting conjectures, the endless hopes and fears they had fostered, and the constancy they alike

felt; yet neither exhibited vexation when they were interrupted by Alexander and the venerable Brukenthal, who drew Mary to his bosom, and wept over her with all the tenderness of a parent that has recovered the offspring he had lost. When Theodore learned the wonderful exertions Brukenthal had made on behalf of this banished family, and saw his bending form, his milk-white hair, and trembling hands, he beheld in him an object of such profound veneration and lively gratitude, that he could have fallen at his feet; and Alexander, on his part, was not the less inspired with love, admiration, and thankfulness to Theodore himself. When Mary had disengaged herself from the arms of the good old man, whose forehead she fondly kissed, she gazed in astonishment on Alexander, who, in his new habiliments, seemed another creature. Shocked at her own contrasting appearance, she quitted the apartment abruptly, and was not long before she found obsequious attendants, elegant dresses, and whatever else the munificent kindness of her royal friend could supply for comfort or magnificence.

It will readily be conceived that the empress not only cherished the family she had restored, but extended her royal favour to all connected with them; so that, if Theodore Dolgorouki had (as many men do) gained in manhood a taste for the ambition he renounced in youth, undoubtedly he might have fully shared with Biron the power and grandeur of Russian government. To such rewards he had in his wife's behalf the greater claim, because they were both willing that her distinction as the widow of Peter should be suffered to lie in oblivion, and the report of her death remain uncontradicted, her title of Princess Theodore Dolgorouki covering her name, and her more perfect development of form and peculiar purity of complexion only inducing the remark "that she was even handsomer than her sister, the young empress, and had a much happier countenance."

There were also many who observed "that the haughtiness of Ulrica, which had much resembled that of her father, was entirely subdued by the severe remedy under which she suffered, and that she now resembled in every respect her pious and amiable mother, by which means it was evident she had won the affections of her husband as entirely as her sister had done. Indeed, he frequently called her Mary, as if in her he had found so perfect a substitute for his first beloved, that he had actually forgotten her loss."

The only person Mary had dreaded in her new connexion proved the one most tenderly attached to her. This was the father of Theodore, who, now being advanced in years, and long declining in health, also bitterly mortified by the disgrace his favourite nephew had incurred, began to see the conduct of his son in a far different light to what he had done a few years before, and readily to accept the tenderness and duty of a heart eminently calculated to display every endearing affection, and "smooth the passage to eternal day." He had heard of Mary's kindness to Ivan through the lips of Alexovitch, and, considering it a species of superhuman benevolence, he received with sincere respect a daughter-in-law so magnanimous and compassionate; and when his own observations unfolded the beautiful simplicity, sincerity, and piety of her character, the untiring kindness of her affectionate heart, and the soundness of her understanding, he became more attached to her than he had ever been to any human being. He

could not tear himself from the place she inhabited, and therefore established himself at Pozeczk so soon as Theodore fixed his residence on his estate near that city, where Alexander also became soon settled. He found, with equal joy and surprise (which was more than partaken by his sister), Madame de Rolack still living unmolested in his father's confiscated mansion, and continuing to receive from the serfs on the estate the same obedient attention they were wont to pay her as representative of the family. Once only had the produce of the property been demanded, for Ivan had been too busy with more material things; and, beyond her sorrow for the exile of those she loved (which was an abiding affliction), the good governess had known little trouble.

When the young Boyar had made the fair orphan we have mentioned his bride, their first visits were to Mary and Alexander, but with the latter they wisely stayed the longest. The happiness of Bruenthal was of a less temporary description, as for the remainder of his life he dwelt in a cottage built for him by Theodore near to the mansion, and in a great measure resembling that in which he had lived with our banished family in Siberia. "It will be," said he to the dear princess, "a memento of great trials and great mercies, for both of which we should be thankful, since never was a human being more evidently blessed by chastisement than my dear friend, your father."

In this cottage the young were taught, the old comforted, the benevolent plans of Theodore examined and assisted; the same generous ardour and hallowed energy which had borne the friend and pastor through the trackless wilds of an unknown and repulsive land, continued to animate him for the remainder of his existence; and though it is probable that life was abridged by his exertions, it could not be deemed so as to usefulness or happiness; he died one Sabbath evening, after performing all his duties to a loving and venerating congregation.

The Empress Anne dearly loved the fair orphan she had adopted, and married her happily just before her own death, which took place at a very early period. Her appointment of an infant in the cradle being dissatisfaction alike to the nobles and the people, the Princess Elizabeth was called to the throne. Resembling her amiable mother, Catherine, in disposition, and with a mind far more enlightened, she made a most excellent sovereign. To Alexander Menzikoff she was always particularly kind, and forwarded his marriage with a noble and wealthy lady, whose disposition resembled his

own. As if she retained good-will to all who had been really or nominally her admirers, not long after ascending the throne Ivan Dolgourouki was once more recalled to Russia, though never received at court, or noticed by any but his near relations.

All others might, indeed, be well excused for passing him unheeded, since time rarely "writes such defeatures on the brow" of the Russ, who lives his century, as the mortification and misery of exile had laid on Count Ivan Dolgourouki. His tall and once elegant form was bent almost double, his head was bald, his hearing imperfect, his face pale, wrinkled, and ghastly. Evil passions and bodily sufferings had written indeible marks in his countenance, but love and hate, grief and rage, had long passed away, and with them the commanding faculties, the general knowledge, which had once characterized him. Though neither idiotic nor deranged, he was become an aged child, pleased with what could gratify the senses, and anxious to preserve life or property, but alike dead to the friendship which might have blessed him, and the ambition which had been his ruin. In the presence of either Theodore or Mary he appeared to labour under a sense of fear or shame, but when with their children the premature old man seemed happy. His frozen faculties would apparently revive to scan a long-forgotten lesson or watch a boyish sport, and his pitying relative trusted that oblivion rested on that long portion of life which had been marked by error and sorrow, and that he often mistook his son for himself when he exclaimed, "Remember, I am older than you, and I can teach you."

The patient reader who has followed Mary through her many trials, and, we trust, rejoiced in the development of her virtues as a daughter and sister, will not doubt that she became exemplary as a wife, a mother, and a mistress. They will be aware that her humble historian has not exaggerated the sufferings of her early life, for, in truth, she had not the inventive faculty necessary for doing it consistently, neither did she choose to exhaust the compassion of those who were willing to follow her through a sorrowful, but, she trusts, an *interesting* story. The Dolgouroukii are now, as they have been for many ages, a great and powerful race of nobles,* the descendants of Alexander Menzikoff, dwelling in honor at Moscow, and she trusts neither party would object to her delineation of the beautiful, the pious, the unfortunate, but eventually happy Mary Menzikoff.

* One of this noble family is now in England.

EXTRACTS FROM HISTORICAL WORKS

RESPECTING

MENZIKOFF AND HIS FAMILY.

ALEXANDER MENTCHIKOFF, Menzikoff, or Menzikoff, for his name is thus differently spelt by different authors, at thirteen years of age was apprenticed to a pastry-cook in Moscow, and accustomed to cry tarts in the streets. The extraordinary sweetness of his voice drew the attention of Peter the Great, who, having conversed with the boy, and found him naturally very clever, caused him to be taken into his palace and educated, in consequence of which he obtained such a knowledge of modern languages as to fit him eminently for diplomacy. In his seventeenth year he became a soldier under Le Fort, the emperor's great favourite, and rose rapidly to the rank of major-general. At Poltava he saved the Russian army by a skilful manœuvre, and preserved the lives of the conquered Swedes by securing them as prisoners. He was rewarded on different occasions with the principalities of Ingria and Plescoff, but, being accused of embezzlement, Peter took from him the first, and laid a heavy fine upon him, but he remitted the one and restored the other, finding the accusation false. He was not less active for his great master in works of peace than in the field of battle or the duties of ambassador, as, under his inspection, Cronstadt was made a seaport, and the metropolis of St. Petersburgh founded on a marsh, which required immense labour before it could be rendered a safe foundation. His abilities were great, his energies unceasing, his ambition grasping, and his taste for grandeur not less remarkable than his love of glory. When Peter entertained ambassadors from foreign countries, and the Knezers and Boyars, the princes and generals of his own court, Menzikoff did the honours of the entertainment, being of fine person, elegant manners, and great powers of conversation. Catherine, the second wife of Peter, had been patronised by the wife of Menzikoff, and was taken from his house to that of the emperor, and after the battle of Pruth, which he professed to owe to her prudence, he crowned her with his own hands, and frequently spoke of her as his successor. At the time of his death, Menzikoff so disposed the soldiery, who were much attached to him, and so exerted himself on her behalf, that she was proclaimed empress, although no will appeared, and the grandson of Peter was evidently the legal heir, then a child between nine and ten. Catherine was grateful; she knew that Menzikoff had suggested her conduct at Pruth, which was the stepping-stone of her elevation, and knew, also, that the real government must be vested in a person of more knowledge and ability than she possessed. She was humane, and recalled many from Siberia whom Peter had banished, but she also banished some at the suggestion of Menzikoff, who was subjected to many insults on account of his humble

extraction. She presented him with her palace of Oranienbaum, then, as now, the most beautiful residence of the Czars. She caused his daughter to be betrothed to Peter, the heir of the throne, a sickly boy, of poor abilities, but she died, after a reign of two years, having irreparably injured her constitution, at the age of thirty-seven.

The young emperor had been accustomed to receive his pleasures from Menzikoff, and at one time loved him; but, having a great desire for athletic exercises, to which his constitution was quite unequal, and which Menzikoff, as a sincere friend, opposed, he chose another counsellor; and Count Ivan Dolgourouki, after a time, succeeded in causing Peter to command Menzikoff and all his family to reside upon his estates at Plescoff. He left the capital in the style of a governor going to exercise regal sway, which, when reported to the emperor, he banished him and all his family, including the young empress, to Siberia, confiscated all his vast property, and caused him to be placed in covered wagons, clothed in the sheepskin garb of the peasantry, and his servants and carriages sent back. His wife died on her journey to that far-distant and horrible country, and on arriving, three of his children were seized with the smallpox, and one of his daughters died. Some unknown friend sent him cattle, sheep, and poultry, which greatly assisted the recovery of his children. His misfortunes inspired him with devotion; he built himself a little chapel, became vigilant in his religious duties, and happy in the exercise of them, but sunk under his misfortunes, and was buried beside his daughter.

Some time after this event, which took place November, 1729, his daughter was returning from the neighbouring village, and heard herself accosted by a peasant from the window of a cottage, and, to her great surprise, recognised in this man the persecutor of her family, Dolgourouki, who, on the accession of the Empress Anna Iwanowna, had, in his turn, become a victim. On relating this to her brother, they were both exceedingly struck with the instability of fortune, and, when they were recalled, left him in possession of their cottage and property. The empress made Alexander the possessor of one fifth* of his father's property, which was immense, and she married his sisters to great advantage.

Such is the substance of all I have been able to gather respecting this extraordinary man in the British Museum, where the works best calculated for my purpose were kindly pointed out by a reverend librarian, whom I have the honour to call my friend.

B. HOFLAND.

* Some say one seventh.

SELF-DEVOTION:

02,

THE HISTORY OF

KATHERINE RANDOLPH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE ONLY DAUGHTER,"

Harriet Martineau

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE SUBALTERN," "THE HUSSAR," &c.

"A perfect woman nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, to command;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light."

WORDSWORTH.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1842.

P R E F A C E.

THE following volumes come before the public under circumstances of so striking and melancholy a nature, as will not, I am sure, fail to give to them a degree of interest at once more powerful and more lasting than their intrinsic merits might perhaps have otherwise called forth. Not that, on the latter score, I have one word of apology to advance for them. Considered merely as the production of a very gifted mind, they stand in need of nothing of the sort; they are every way worthy of the well-earned reputation of the authoress of the "Only Daughter." But as the gentle spirit which dictated, and the delicate hand that wrote, will take no more interest in human affairs, I feel that, as her friend, and the editor of her first contribution to the literature of the age, I cannot permit them to pass unheralded into the world. Hence it has become my sad duty to announce that "Katherine Randolph" is a posthumous work; written, indeed, and printed off more than two years ago, yet now standing forth as the last legacy of her whose genius wove the web. For Harriette Campbell has been removed, in the very springtime of youth and beauty, from this world to a better, without having been permitted so much as to see, in their perfect state, the results of some months of light, but not, therefore, unlabourious exertion.

It will not be expected of me that, in the preface to a particular romance, I should give any sketch, however brief, of the career of the individual who composed it. Another and a better opportunity may be found for effecting this. But I am anxious to guard the reputation of my dear departed friend from whatever disadvantage shall arise to it out of such contrast as might

not unnaturally be drawn between the excellences of "Katherine Randolph" on the one hand, and of the "Cardinal Virtues" on the other. The latter, though published several months ago, was finished just before the death of the writer. The former has passed from her hands upward of two years; and if, as I doubt not, the judicious critic shall find that the one evinces a judgment more correct and a taste more matured than the other, let him remember that these advances, both in judgment and in taste, kept pace with the advance in her years. Nor is this all which it is right that he should observe. As if the gentle spirit had felt that its period of sojourn here was growing narrow, it seems of late to have applied its energies to higher subjects than those which speak exclusively to the imagination. Harriette Campbell never, indeed, wrote a line of which the tendency was not to improve the moral feeling, as well as to amuse the fancy of the reader. But in the "Cardinal Virtues" the inculcation of pure and righteous principles constitutes the staple or main ingredient of the work, to which the story serves no other purpose than that of ornament—the setting which surrounds the jewel—full of taste and beauty—yet, as compared with the jewel itself, utterly valueless.

I offer this volume, then, to the readers of works of its class, with a sore heart, indeed, but in no apprehension as to the nature of the reception with which they are likely to be honoured; and not being able to trust myself farther, I do so without one word for myself either of remark or comment.

G. R. GLIG.

Chelsea, October, 1842.

KATHERINE RANDOLPH;

OR,

SELF-DEVOTION.

CHAPTER I.

"The child is father of the man."

WORDSWORTH.

"Come along, sister," said a boy of ten years old to a soft-eyed little girl, who was kneeling beside a flower-bed in one corner of the garden; "come along with me to the glen. I have been playing at Alexander the Great for an hour, and have conquered Persia and India, but there is nobody to play the rebellious generals, so I am going off to have a swing."

And he flung down his bow and his sword, and pulled his sister impatiently by the sleeve.

"Very well," was the reply; "only wait till I have carried my salad into the house, or it will be all withered before mamma requires it for her supper, and it is my own very first salad. See, there are six good radishes, and two or three of my handfuls of cresses, and I sowed them all myself, and papa says they are better than his."

"Pooh, you need not take them in just now," said the youthful conqueror, with the usual despotism that characterizes heroes. "Put them into the toolhouse, and they will be quite fresh by the time we return. The swing is not so far away now as it used to be, you know; Donald tied it to the oak-tree in the little glen this morning."

"Oh, Julian, I had forgotten," said the little girl, her progress to the toolhouse suddenly interrupted by his last words. "Papa said that the swing was so much higher now, that we were upon no account to sit in it until the straps were properly fastened; and as Donald had no time to do it to-day, we must not swing at all till to-morrow."

"Why, you don't suppose that papa included *me* in his caution to you," replied Julian, with an air of outraged dignity. "That was only to prevent you from going alone to the swing—he has no objection that *I* should swing you."

The girl paused for a moment as if to weigh the truth of this opinion, and then shook her head. "Well, Julian, I don't know," said she, "but we were both together in the room, and I am almost sure papa said 'children,' but I'll run and ask him in a minute."

"No, no, there is no necessity for your asking him," interrupted Julian; "I know very well what he meant; and even if he had intended that I should not go to the swing till the straps were fastened, it was only that you might be saved a longing to go too. You don't suppose, sister Katherine, that I, who have been all alone on the Inverawe swing, which goes nine-

ty feet from the ground, can be afraid or unable to take care of myself or you in *any* other. Let us go, and then at supper, when we tell papa that I swung you safely without the straps, he will call me a brave boy, as he did when I stopped Miss Forbes's pony that day it was making for the crag—come."

"Ah, but, Julian, you forget," answered the little girl, "papa said yours was true courage, because you braved a great danger to attain a great good, and that no courage could be called rashness when it was exercised to save life; but it is a different sort of courage when we only want to gratify ourselves, and to show papa that he is mistaken; and, indeed, brother Julian, I don't think that our going to swing, when papa bade us not, will be courage at all, but disobedience."

And she looked appealingly to him, as if to inquire whether or not her reasoning were conclusive.

Julian whistled for a little while, and began to nibble the cresses which Katherine carried in her pinafore, and when he spoke again, the swing did not seem to be in his thoughts.

"It is very odd, Katie, that, though mamma pets me so much more than you, I am not half so kind to her. You have been scorching your face for a fortnight with these radishes, all because they were earlier than any others, and there is always something or other for you to think of for her, while I do nothing but entangle her silk, and make her head ache with romping."

"Ah, but indeed you do a great deal more than I, brother," answered Katherine. "Don't you often read to her and make up her accounts, and don't you give her your shoulder to lean upon always when she goes either to Inverawe or Killurie?"

"Yes, I know the reason she likes that," said Julian; "it's because—because I'm so like my grandfather, Lord Julian Douglas."

Little Katherine did not make any reply to this speculative opinion, except that her mamma loved Julian so much, that there was no reason necessary but her affection to account for her preference of him as an escort.

Julian delighted in being told of his mother's affection, as was very soon proved by the sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks with which he afterward exclaimed,

"I've found out something that I can do for her. Do you remember the blue flower that clings to the damp rocks on Eelinaskine, and how anxious she was yesterday to have some of it planted beside our own spring? I'll row myself over to-night instead of swinging, and

pull a great many roots, and Donald and I shall plant them in the morning before she awakes."

Katherine looked up anxiously. "But, dear Julian," said she, "you have never rowed alone, and I am afraid you could not manage the boat all by yourself. Wait till the morning, and Donald will go with you, and then the flowers will be in nice order, and have no time to wither before they are planted."

"Pooh!" answered Julian, once more; "I have rowed and moored the boat all alone before, when Donald or Hugh were with me, and why cannot I do it without them? I must get the flowers to-night, because I may have forgotten in the morning, or it may rain, or papa may require the boat, or a thousand things may happen to prevent me. I must get them to-night."

"I fear papa would not like you to go alone," said Katherine, very gravely; "I am sure he would be very angry, Julian."

"What right have you to be sure, sister Katherine?" asked the representative of Alexander, with his prototype's own impatience of control; "I am certain papa never forbade me to go to Elinaskine, whatever he said about the new swing; and I am not going to take it for granted that he would disapprove my going alone; it is quite enough that he has never forbidden it."

"But don't you *think*, dear Julian," said the little girl, in a coaxing voice, "don't you *think* that if papa knew that you had gone with the boat alone, it would make him very unhappy all the time you were away?"

"Well," answered he, "but papa will never know until I am safe and sound at home again, and then there will be no room for unhappiness."

Katherine stopped for a moment, and then said very slowly, as if the idea she meant to express was not quite clearly defined, "I don't *think* it makes any difference in the *wrongness* of a thing when it is not known. I am sure, if papa would be made unhappy by *knowing* that you were gone, it would not be right to go, even if he were not to know of it."

"Ah, but it would though," answered the young sophist, confidently; "all the harm would be in making papa unhappy; so, if I were to prevent him being so by never letting him know till the danger was over, there would be no harm at all."

"Yes, brother Julian," said little Katherine, speaking with great earnestness, and with her face close to his, "I am sure there would; for we ought not to do what we know to be wrong, even although we know no one would be hurt by it."

"Wrong!" repeated he; "what is wrong—what can be wrong that is not to hurt any one?"

"I don't know, brother," answered she, blushing and looking a little puzzled; "you are so much cleverer than I, that I always *appear* to be mistaken, whether I am or not. But do you remember what papa was saying to us one night about feeling and principle, and about even good impulses being dangerous guides? I am sure, if you go over to Elinaskine to-night alone to get mamma the *Pinguicula*, that your good impulse will be a dangerous guide, because it will lead you to be careless of the means you use

to gratify it, and of the consequences it may lead to."

And little Katherine drew a long breath, as if she had delivered some grand sentence which she had learned with great attention.

"Humph!" said Julian, in a tone of discontent; "then I suppose the impulse that made me stop Miss Forbes's pony was a dangerous guide too, because it prevented me from calculating the means and the consequences?"

"Oh ne, no! that was surely a different sort of impulse altogether," said Katherine; "that sort of impulse could never be a dangerous one."

"How many sorts of impulse are there, Miss Katie, I should like to know?" asked Julian, disdainfully. "I don't understand your code of morals at all. What is right in one case, in my opinion, must be right in all; and if papa called me a brave boy for stopping Miss Forbes, he will call me a brave boy for venturing over the loch alone to get the flowers mamma wanted, and which she would have to wait a long time for if she was to depend on Donald."

And he strode with great dignity along the path which led to the water.

Katherine strove with prayers and entreaties to dissuade him, but he laughed at what he was pleased to term her *womanishness*, and began to unmoor the boat with great skill and activity.

The little girl watched him till she was quite sure he was in earnest, and then turned away with a passion of tears. She would not go to inform their parents, although such a course would have relieved her apprehension at once, because she loved her twin brother too well to subject him to the remotest chance of reproof that could possibly be avoided; but, choosing a by-path, she flew like a bird the distance of half a mile to the cottage of Donald, the ploughman and factotum of the house; and, by dint of tears and persuasions, induced him to lay aside his employment, launch another boat, and follow Julian to the little island.

CHAPTER II.

"A child, more than all other gifts,
Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude."

WODEWORTH.

The garden wherein the children played, as related in the last chapter, was an adjunct of the manse of Killurie—a simple domicil, separating, by its glebe and its belt of fir plantation, the strong feudal towers of Killurie Castle, which crested the summit of the crag, on the one hand, from the broad plains and waving forests which surrounded the mansion-house of Inverawe on the other; and lent their fertile beauty to the valley which slept beneath the shelter of a thousand hills.

The manse was pleasantly situated on a rising ground, at the foot of which the avenue of each of the noble policies in its vicinity was terminated by its gate of entrance; and on both sides, the long, winding path which skirted the minister's lawn ended in a stately lodge, such as might well eclipse the modest beauties of the little manse entirely.

But the thorns, and lilacs, and laburnums, and

acacias, which were bushes when the plays of Julian and Katherine were first acted under them, are now introduced to the reader tall and fragrant—a grove of blossoming shrubs, through which the walls of the cottage could scarcely have peeped, even had the lime-trees on either side afforded a less impenetrable screen; while the house itself seemed retiring within its own humble privacy, from the lordly neighbours which stretched out their arms to envelop it.

The fanciful might find in the circumstance a type of the disposition of its occupant, William Randolph, pastor of the beautiful and far-spreading vale of Inverawe. A man of excellent family, and such mental and moral endowments as rendered him at once an ornament to the sacred profession he had embraced, and such a companion as a gentleman of any rank might find himself privileged in securing; yet Mr. Randolph displayed his own dignified consistency in withstanding every temptation to the intimate fellowship which was pressed upon him by his noble neighbours on both sides. The minister of Killurie was not to be tempted from his solitude by the gayest of those brilliant circles which so often gathered round the festive hearths of the castle and the great house; and Julian and Katherine had outgrown their childhood with little advantage of society beyond the Christmas dinner at Killurie, and occasionally a stiff day spent with the young honourable at the mansion-house, when the midsummer holydays brought him to Inverawe.

A stronger reason, however, than natural timidity, restrained Mr. Randolph from the enjoyment of that social circle which he was so eminently fitted to adorn. His mind was of too high a tone, and, despite the rustic seclusion in which it was condemned, of too refined a polish not to appreciate to its utmost extent the value of a companionship so unexceptionable as the hospitalities of Glenurie seldom failed to afford him; and often, when a circle of the great and the noble would have smiled its most gracious welcome to his approach, he would withdraw from the temptation without a sigh, and devote himself to the duties of a home which had little in it to compensate for the enjoyment he had refused.

At an early period of his youth, when the incumbent of another and a much poorer benefice, Mr. Randolph had married the youngest daughter of a Scotch lord, who bestowed her girlish affections upon him when he could boast of no higher independence than that which the office of tutor to her elder brothers afforded.

The beauty of the youthful Katherine, and her devotion to himself, blinded the penniless student to all the probable consequences of a union so ill assort'd; and the young lady's father offered no farther opposition to their wishes than a few words of paternal remonstrance, and the declaration that a Rousseau and wedding present were all the dower which his own scanty inheritance as a younger son could enable him to bestow upon his child.

Accordingly, after his own exertions had succeeded in obtaining the lowly independence alluded to, Mr. Randolph took to his humble hearth a wife, whom no wider experience had fitted for the struggle of fate than seventeen years of uninterrupted luxury could be said to supply.

The love that is lightly won must not be trust-

ed as the staff of life and hope. The heart that has been given at the whim of an idle fancy must not be leaned upon as the stay, the rest, the solace in difficulties—must not be looked to for that sunny and joyous devotion which finds its all of happiness in the sympathy of the beloved, and flings the halo of its presence over every darker shade of life, accounting all trials as sunnies on its golden beam, and striving with fortune till she is overcome by reason of the might of its own confidence.

Such love is not the growth of a momentary and girlish enthusiasm; and therefore, when the youthful and highborn bride awoke from her dream of romance, and found herself—still, indeed, the idol of him to whom she had given her vows, but no more the flattered, the followed, the caressed of a crowd of unheeded satellites—the granddaughter of a marquis—the petted child of her father's household—when she awoke, and found herself doomed to the drudgery of an obscure economy, yet nowise accustomed to its routine, the feeble thread that bound her affections snapped asunder; and Randolph found at last, when he had raised it to the sacred sovereignty of his domestic shrine, that his divinity was formed of dust and ashes.

Randolph's heart was the seat of every tender and beautiful feeling; his mind the sanctuary of every strong and enlightened idea; and he also woke from his vision of passionate enthusiasm, to find himself, in heart and mind alike, cut off from the companionship which was his sun of life.

It was long, however, before his kind and manly energy would permit itself to sink under this first bitter disappointment. He strove with all the constancy of his nature to lighten the burden which had crushed his bud of promise into decay, and to sweeten the fate which a misplaced love had marked out for him, but without success. Disappointment and the absence of wonted luxuries gnawed the tiny meshes which had once ensnared his wife's fancy, and sullen estrangement soon filled the place of her precipitate devotion.

Health and energy gave way so completely under the selfish indulgence, that even the birth of her beautiful twins failed to snatch Mrs. Randolph from the fate of a nervous, querulous invalid; and although a few years of patient effort removed the gifted and respected minister to the comparative affluence of Killurie, yet the torpid faculties of his wife were no longer susceptible of being reinvigorated by external circumstances.

Moreover, the sense of inferiority to those whom her birth taught Mrs. Randolph to consider as equals, rendered the society of Killurie and Inverawe intolerable to her; and she withdrew from it, as much as the manly and dignified good taste of her husband would permit, far more than the duties of her station rendered allowable.

Mr. Randolph bore with the wayward and sensitive pride of his wife uncomplainingly. He could not forget that for him she had sacrificed that rank, the loss of which seemed to imbitter her existence. He refused, therefore, to obey the impulse that tempted him to escape from a cheerless home to a brilliant and intelligent circle, where he was both welcomed and appreciated, and, devoting himself to the education of his children, did his best, when circumstances per-

mitted, to ameliorate his wife's habitual melancholy, with a generous self-sacrifice that did honour to his sacred profession. Last and noblest of all, feeling that he was himself rather an object of aversion than of interest to her, it was the study of his benevolence to excite her maternal affection into something like action or vitality.

Even in this, however, he seemed likely to fail. Of what use were accomplishments to one who was all her life to be buried in Glenurie? What signified grace, or polish of mind or manners, to a youth who was in all probability to inherit nothing but the labours and the obscurity of his father? This was the continual tendency of her reasoning; and very few even of the lighter touches of education, so generally attributable to the hand of a woman, did the youthful twins receive, but from the tender and indefatigable care of their father.

Julian and Katherine had entered their twelfth year, when a circumstance occurred which turned the channel of their mother's feelings, and restored at least one of her children to the place which it seemed as if nature had withheld from them. A maternal uncle of Mr. Randolph, his only remaining relative, wrote home from India to declare that his fortune was made, and his resolution fixed to return at some period which he left chance to determine, for the purpose of installing Julian, his youthful kinsman, into all the dignities and privileges of his heir.

Half the load that weighed on Mrs. Randolph's existence was removed by this intelligence. The gulf of obscurity that had yawned before her child was suddenly filled up, and she found it no longer unnecessary to improve his mind, and to polish and cultivate his manners. She confessed that his person was beautiful and patrician, and his spirit stamped with the noblest impress of high birth; and from being merely the favourite of an hour—the plaything of a capricious moment—the source of some part of her most irritable pride, Julian soon became the idol and darling of his mother—the one single object on which the whole fondness of her life was lavished.

Katherine, the gentle, watchful nurse of her sickness and her solitude, was forgotten or overlooked, and the husband of her youth dwelt beside her almost as a stranger; but Julian and his interests, both present and future—Julian, with the gifts of warm and generous feeling—of cultivated intellect and graceful natural manners—Julian, the pupil of that solitary husband who had been so sullenly abandoned to the unparticipated labours of his children's education—for Julian, the whole world seemed too narrow to furnish forth the blind and indiscriminating indulgences she would have heaped upon him. Her existence had now but one star—the centre of its orbit, and round and round it she revolved continually, forgetting that there ever was, or ever could have been, a rival interest.

Mr. Randolph mourned in bitterness over his wife's perverseness. The study of his life had been to counteract, by gentle discipline, the warm, passionate impulses and impetuous pride which formed in some degree Julian's maternal inheritance, and which only the strong hand and Christian spirit of his father knew how to tame down to the level of virtue. Julian's thirst for the praise of those whom he loved just trembled

on the brink of vanity; his brave, boyish independence of spirit was separated by a slender and sometimes indistinct shade from pride and haughtiness; and the excessive warmth and precipitance of his affections threw him so completely under their dominion, that Mr. Randolph soon perceived the more than ordinary need of strong principle to control them.

The blind indulgence lavished on Julian by his mother was the exact recipe for deepening and establishing all the defects of his character; and the conviction of this fact led Mr. Randolph often to draw the band of his paternal discipline tighter than was consistent with his more settled views of what their relative positions required.

Such instances of sternness, however, were destined but to defeat their own aim. Julian was invariably soothed, and caressed, and consoled elsewhere, for the displeasure which his pride or his impetuosity had drawn down, and taught to consider himself an injured and innocent object of his father's dislike or indifference.

As a matter of course, the confidence and familiarity which had once subsisted between Julian and his father were gradually broken up; and the boy, with an earnest and deferential respect for that good opinion which was wont to be his most precious gift from Heaven, found himself deprived of it by circumstances which the culpable fondness of his mother prevented him from tracing to their true source.

The evil atmosphere which bade fair to blight the very seeds of virtue in the breast of the youthful Julian, had no influence over the sphere in which fortune had placed his sister. Katherine's humble prospects failed to interest the regard which the very circumstance of their inferiority ought to have engaged and augmented tenfold.

But the tender friend, the honoured intimate, and confidential companion of her father, found, in his wise and gentle counsels, a precious substitute for the worldly advantages which had raised up to Julian an affection of such questionable value; and the effect of circumstances on the character of each did not fail very shortly to manifest itself.

CHAPTER III.

"Voilà mon oncle!"—*GIL BLAS.*

MR. RANDOLPH's recollection of the kinsman to whom Julian owed his improved prospects in life was not favourable to the gay schemes which his wife had built upon the anticipation of the old gentleman's return. His memory, albeit severely taxed, since his uncle Fletcher had made his adieu to him when but just out of his nurse's arms, presented the picture of a cross, mean-looking little man, with sharp gray eyes, which never failed to ferret out every particular aggravation of every boyish trick he might have perpetrated in his presence; and the subsequent remarks generally passed upon the Indian merchant in his father's house gave him, to his imagination, as a keen, parsimonious worldling; one who would save a fortune if he did not win it, and cherish a bitter grudge.

against the individual, whosoever he might be, that was destined by fate or his own caprice to enjoy the fruits of his labours, even when the hand that gathered them should be in the dust.

These reminiscences were strongly at variance with the voluntary announcement of good-will which, after a silence of ten years' standing, the nabob had forwarded to his nephew.

Mr. Randolph had scarcely preserved the semblance of an intimacy with his uncle since the death of his parents; and when the intelligence of his marriage was replied to with a letter of unqualified reprehension, all communication had wellnigh ceased between them. Notifications of the birth of his children, and of the favourable change in his own circumstances, had severally been answered by a formal mercantile letter; and, as far as Mr. Randolph could recollect, the old man had, except from these notifications, no knowledge whatever of the existence of the youth whom he proposed to invest with the dignities of heir to his overgrown possessions.

All these circumstances combined to render the brilliant expectations with which poor Julian was every day flattered by one parent, a very insecure tenure in the more reasonable calculation of the other; and, had not the constitution of his own mind fortunately been such as to throw off with great facility all the anxieties attendant upon wealth or its acquirement, life would have seemed to him but a great cast of the dice, in which Uncle Fletcher's fortune was the stake, and the loss of his game destined to leave the future a blank.

Mr. Randolph could not but contemplate, even after a correspondence of some years had matured and developed the plans of the old *millionnaire*, the possibility of a change in his views; and fully aware of the blight which such a disappointment must bring upon the existence of his son, it was his earnest desire to render Julian in some measure independent of the caprices of fortune and his uncle, by fixing on a profession suitable at once to his tastes and to the possibilities of his future station, and making him sufficiently master of it to place himself beyond the risk of destitution, should that change come over the colour of his fate which, despite the flatteries of the present moment, Mr. Randolph found it quite impossible to overlook.

But this excellent and reasonable proposal was destined, as usual, to encounter every objection which a weak judgment and a vain and wayward temper could suggest. Law, physic, and divinity were alike rejected; and without consulting the boy himself, his mother declared that, if he followed either of the three professions, it would be without her maternal sanction, and contrary to her most earnest and affectionate remonstrances.

Mr. Randolph, for a few days after this foolish and unfeeling announcement, looked sad, and pale, and thoughtful, as was his wont on every such display of uncongeniality between them; and then the matter was compromised by the gentle and wise moderation which dignified all his proceedings. It was agreed that, as Mr. Fletcher had so distinctly avowed his good intentions towards Julian, the duty of the boy's parents was to submit the choice of his profession, or the option of his following one or not, to the ar-

bitration of him who had assumed the guardianship of his fortunes.

Accordingly, a letter was decreed to pass to and from Calcutta before the bent of Julian's studies — though he was now in his fifteenth year — could be determined. That was not the worst of it, however; for, after the year's delay had taken place, the letter was found, as is not unfrequent in such cases, not worth waiting for. The nabob, with a gruff acknowledgment of the attention, ordered that his grand-nephew should be sent to a counting-house in the city, there to acquire the information by which the riches intended for him had been accumulated, and by which, if their future possessor was disposed to emulate their present, their value might yet be increased twofold. He added, however, that such a course was necessary only in so far as it would open the young man's mind; for the terms of the writer's will, and even the provision which he should make for him during his own lifetime, must place his heir beyond the need of personal exertion.

Such a prospect as this letter revealed was not likely to reconcile Mrs. Randolph to the scheme, which, in so much less objectionable a form, she had thought proper to reject. Accordingly, her husband had the scenes of the preceding year to act over again, with the aggravation of knowing that, had it not been for his own indulgent submission to her caprices, Julian might by this time have been beyond reach of the obnoxious plan of the counting-house. He was determined, however, to abide by the decision to which he had referred the calling of his son, and not all the indignation of the lady was sufficient to shake the resolution, which, he declared, the boy's own free-will should alone have power to affect.

Julian was fifteen years old — quite competent, therefore, to judge for himself even in a matter so important; and, accordingly, the letter of his uncle was given to him, and, at his father's express command, no words were spoken on either side of the question which could influence his choice.

There were none such required; neither were the hours of reflection and consideration advised by his father at all necessary to the arrangement of Julian's ideas on the subject. He seated himself in the window of the parlour, read the letter deliberately through, and then advanced to return it to his father, with a glow on his cheek and a sparkle in his eye that made him look like a young Telemachus.

"Well?" said Mr. Randolph.

"Well, sir," answered Julian, respectfully, but with something like an effort to restrain himself, "I will not go to a counting-house in the city of London."

"What do you propose to do, my boy?" asked his father, in a mild, confidential tone, and as if he wished to convince Julian that he had nothing to fear from him, be his decision what it might. "We have not talked upon this subject for many months; and when we last discussed it, I thought you had either no fixed purpose of your own, or else that you hesitated to declare it. Tell me, without reserve, all you have thought about the matter; and depend upon it, my dear boy, that, as far as is consistent with my fortune, and what I consider your best prospects in life,

I will strain every nerve to bring about what you yourself desire."

The youth looked as though his father's kindness had roused some slumbering hope, and he stood before him for a moment as if gathering his courage for a disclosure. Mr. Randolph gazed on his son's varying colour and downcast eye, and sighed as the idea rose in his mind, that from his favourite Katherine no such distrust of his affection was to be apprehended. These were some of the bitterest fruits on the dead branch of his domestic happiness, and the words of playful familiarity with which he strove to reassure Julian took a tender tone from the reflection.

"Well, father," said the youth, at last, in the frank, manly tone that was natural to him, "you may make a lawyer, or a doctor, or a minister of me, if you like; I am ready to submit myself in all things to your judgment, and I hope that the good instruction you have always given me will prevent my being a disgrace to any profession I may enter, whatever it is. But I suspect that I have not talent, or perhaps, rather, I have not application, to succeed well in any of the learned professions, and—and—I know that I would rather shoot deer and kill trout in Glenurie all my life for a subsistence, than drag it out in a dingy corner of the city of London. You know, father, I am so unaccustomed to a sedentary life, that it must seem hateful to me in any shape."

"True," said Mr. Randolph, with a smile; "therefore you bid fair to pass through life as the heir of Mr. Fletcher, and nothing more."

"No! no, indeed," exclaimed Julian, warmly, "that is the very last thing I should like to do. I would much rather earn a competence for myself, than be dependant on any one's caprice for a principality."

"You will never earn a competence, my dear Julian; I question if in these days you are likely even to earn a laurel in the path in which you are most eager to seek it," said his father. Julian blushed. "A commission in a Highland regiment would suit both your habits and your prospects; would it not, Julian?"

The boy looked up to him with a glance of rapture in his large black eye, that spoke to his father's soul.

From that day Julian's mother was pleased, his father at least resigned, his sister in raptures, and himself a soldier.

With great submission and gratitude, however, Julian accepted his father's proposal of spending the next two years in hard study, and even of going through a short course at the University previous to his final plunge into the bustle and excitement of military life.

It is not, therefore, till the close of his nineteenth year that we can introduce Julian as an officer in his majesty's service, spending the last few weeks of his leave at the manse, whither he had repaired to welcome his Uncle Fletcher, whose landing in England succeeded the period of his own appointment but by two months, and of whose mode of appreciating the change in the pursuits of his youthful heir, the next chapter may possibly afford us some opportunity of judging.

CHAPTER IV.

"Dost thou love pictures?"—SHAKESPEARE.

It was a soft, calm evening in August, the very height of the Highland summer, and everything in and about the little manse took the sweet and cheerful character which nature borrows from the influence of sunshine, and which, in the same proportion, virtue lends to the features of the human face.

The chamber from which, in the privilege of our vocation, we would lift the curtain, is a pleasant, low-roofed parlour on the ground floor, lighted by two large old-fashioned oriel windows, and spacious enough to afford ample accommodation for a moderate sufficiency of chairs and sofas, besides a grand piano and a well-filled bookcase, which occupied one entire side of the room. There were flower-stands in the windows, and bouquets in china vases on every table. In one corner stood a tambour frame, and in another a large workbasket of snowy wicker revealed glimpses of a coarse fabric that looked like Dorcas work. Over the fireplace was hung a portrait of a beautiful girl, in some fantastic dress of the last generation, and with both her tiny feet resting on a coronet, and immediately under it a clever pencil-sketch of a handsome boy of ten years old, standing on a cliff, and grasping the rein of a terrified pony, which stood on the brink with a female rider.

There was a small fire of logs, and both windows were thrown open to admit the soft evening air, and on one of the cushions of the window-seat there was a guitar lying, and a little silk tartan plaid, and beside it, in the recess, stood a little table with drawing materials, which gave that side of the apartment a certain *tournure* of romance which was exceedingly agreeable to the imagination, and not at all infringed upon by the circumstance of a large bunch of housekeeping keys, that shared the resting-place of the crayons and pencils.

There is no such assistance to one's ideas of the air of an apartment as a description of the various positions of its occupants; so the part which is generally of most consequence to a picture will be supplied by us rather as a finishing touch to what is gone before, than as a matter of much individual interest to the looker-on.

On one side of the fire, a lady, very infirm in appearance, was seated in an arm-chair of most inviting dimensions and capacity, which was covered with a rich brocaded silk, bearing a resemblance so striking to a similar fabric well known to me, that I think it must once have personated one of those gorgeous ancestral petticoats which sensible people occasionally put to such uses as the one alluded to, and others retain upon the dignified seclusion of a ruler, wherewithal to tempt the hearts and vanities of their granddaughters.

The lady and the chair were in excellent keeping; the latter exemplifying, in its change of dynasty, the fluctuations of time and tide; and the former exhibiting, in her delicate and faded form, the waywardness of fate, which steals often the rose from the cheek and the glitter from the eye when time would have willingly spared them.

The lady was daintily habited in a pale-coloured silk gown, and her spotless French gloves and cambric handkerchief seemed the appendages of one who knew nothing of the mechanism of a *menage*. Her employment might be guessed from a fairy volume bound in rose-colour, and evincing, from the paucity of the letter-press and the frequency of the illustrations, a literary taste of the very lightest order. The book was as suitable to the calm, pale, pulseless quiescence of the reader's person and features, as a volume of calf skin profundities would have been opposed to it. A crystal essence-bottle, which shared the attention bestowed upon her studies, completes the picture, and enables us to pass to the other side of the apartment.

On one corner of a sofa a gentleman was seated, who furnished as vivid a contrast to the first-mentioned figure of the group as the most ardent admirer of strong shades could desire. He was a tall, muscular, and handsome man, in the prime of life, with a bland and elevated expression of the eyes and forehead, which conveyed an idea of suffering even in its extreme sweetness, and touched the looker-on with a feeling of sympathy, which the manly and intelligent dignity of his bearing never failed to control. He was dressed in clerical black; and there was something in his air which, without bordering on the aristocratic—which implies always an undefinable tint of fashion—expressed the gentlemanly refinement of an intellectual mind, and an elegant and cultivated taste. He was caressing a beautiful hound which lay near him on the carpet, and looked up from time to time to reply to the chitchat of another member of the circle whom it is not yet time to delineate.

The other end of the sofa was occupied by a little, wrinkled old man, in a shining suit of snuff brown, a magnificent diamond ring, a gold chain, studs, breastpin, and spectacles. His hair was frizzled up to that dry, wiry fineness of texture which indicates long residence in a warm climate, and his complexion resembled that which majesty wears on a new-struck farthing. He was reading a red book wonderfully resembling the almanac with all the intensity of attention which generally characterizes people engaged in any employment to which they are totally unaccustomed; and his small, sparkling gray eyes wore, even when fixed upon the page, an expression of such intense acuteness, that you might have thought them capable of searching for gold in the very bowels of the earth.

The only remaining member of the circle was standing before one of the little tables which, in endless number and every variety of design, ornamented the room. An open workbox was before her, and she was busily engaged in repairing the injury which a gentleman's white glove had sustained in a first attempt to draw it on. She was a girl of eighteen or nineteen years old, tall, and very slender; with a face which, if not beautiful, possessed a peculiarity of expression which, though very difficult to describe, is yet appreciated by every heart that lies open to the admiration of beauty and goodness. Her complexion was of the most limpid transparency that belongs to youth, and her hair dark, silken, and luxuriant. But it was in her eye that the

lady's stronghold of beauty lay—it was a magnificent eye. It might have done for a genius, and yet something whispered to you, while you looked upon it, that it belonged only to a meek and lowly Christian; for there was a pure depth of innocence, a holy and quenchless light of womanly devotion in it, which might have been mistaken for poesie, had not the simple and disengaged liveliness of her address carried conviction with it that her enthusiasm was of the happiest and healthiest tone, and her reason and principle undimmed by a beam from the poisoned atmosphere of this world's passions.

That glorious eye, with its dark, cloudless gray, its long, chiselled lid, and its drooping eyelash, was absolutely necessary to stamp her features with the distinction they deserved; for when the lid was dropped, as at this moment, over her employment, you might imagine her only a gentle, pretty-looking girl, dignified because of the utter absence of all affectation, and graceful from the exclusion of all singularity. But so soon as the rich fringing lash was raised, and the full, large orb dilated with its gaze of animation, the heart beat to trace there the depth of woman's most costly and heaven-born feeling. That gaze revealed a soul whose sweet impulses rose to meet the exigence of every moment, and stooped to every trifle that showed itself in her domestic path, yet possessed a strong, unfathomed energy, which is ready to sacrifice a dearer treasure than existence itself in the cause that is most precious to it.

Every movement proved the single-minded simplicity of her nature: the very threading of her needle was an act of grace and elegance, because you might see that she was thinking of nothing but the single use to which it tended; and when she spoke, the effect of her words was infallibly a desire for their continuance, an involuntary and almost unconscious approbation of their import, even though the phrase in which they were clothed was not sufficiently distinguished to be remembered.

Her dress was of the simplest species of white muslin, and, though arranged without any approximation to coquetry, was not devoid of the closest attention to the little indescribable pretences without which no woman, of whatever age, can deserve the highest praise of the toilet by being perfectly *bien mise*.

There was a delightful blending of youthful liveliness and womanly propriety in her manners, that won every one's affection, and no one's jealousy. There was an unpretending and honest humility, a total absence of display, and a quiet appropriation of her talents and accomplishments to the single use which makes them of any value, namely, the amusement and enlivening of the domestic circle: there was an unceasing attention to the wants and wishes of all human kind, without any betrayal of the source of their gratification; there was a youthful activity, a continual readiness for every demand, a nicety of domestic arrangement, and a keen appreciation of the studies which were an indulgence, and not a vocation; and, above all, there was an unfailing fountain of good temper, and good humour, and good spirits, in her heart and in her converse, that made her anything but a fit heroine of romance.

The lady in the brocaded silk fauteuil, albeit

unused to the utterance of important sentences, was the first speaker whom I find it at all necessary for my purpose to quote; and her words, it is hoped, will be weighed by the standard of her own loquacity, not as an index of the conversation which followed them. She raised herself languidly from her cushions, and said, in a weak, regulated voice, and without addressing anybody,

"Is Julian going to Killurie this evening?"

"Yes, mother," answered the young seamstress; "he was obliged to promise Miss Forbes, or she would have forced him to go to dinner. Poor Julian regrets exceedingly that he will be deprived of his ride with Uncle Fletcher; but the general and Miss Forbes are not to be withstood. He is coming to say good-night before he goes."

"Where's Killurie?" asked the gentleman in brown, closing the almanac suddenly.

"Killurie!" repeated the young lady, with a comical expression of surprise, as if she wondered whether it were possible that any one had been to India and back again without knowing what was so familiar to her; "Killurie is on the top of Craig Vohr."

"A most comprehensive description, I must confess," interposed the gentleman in black, smiling. "Killurie Castle, my dear sir, is the house of that General Forbes whom I mentioned to you in our walk as a kind friend of Julian's. It is only separated from us by the length of the approach, and the general is fond of seeing Julian with him when he is at home, which has been so seldom of late, that I presume the boy thinks it a sort of duty to devote more of his time to him than seems expedient when other claims are considered."

"Humph!" said the old gentleman, dryly; "no great room for wondering whence the military propensities have sprung. And who may Miss Forbes be? Does she form no part of the attraction to Kil—what's its name?"

"Oh yes, yes, a great part," answered the young lady; "she is one of Julian's prime favourites, and so is he of hers."

"Humph!" again ejaculated the nabob; "pray, is it a part of the general's friendship to bestow upon Ensign Randolph the honour of becoming his son-in-law?"

The girl answered this ill-humoured inquiry with a burst of genuine merriment, and her father took down the pencil sketch that hung over the mantelpiece, and handed it to the old gentleman, with the information that the lady represented Miss Forbes.

There was something in the relative ages of the two figures that seemed to reassure him; for, after a long examination of the picture through his spectacles, he laid it down without farther remark.

At that moment the door opened, and the subject of the last few minutes' conversation made his appearance in *propriæ personæ*. He was a noble-looking youth, dressed in the full costume of a Highland gentleman, and presenting in his dark, curling hair, brown complexion, and high, regular features, a resemblance to the inferior graces of his sister, which at once proclaimed the nature of the tie that knit them together. You would have guessed them immediately for twins, even despite the appearance

of maturity which the dress and stature of the boy, and the glowing and animated expression of his features, lent him over the girl's gentleness of mien and manners. Her eye was by far the finest, though there were passion, and genius, and enthusiasm in his too; but the smile of both was wellnigh identical; it was equally bright, and kind, and innocent in each; and when they spoke, there was a similarity in their voices, such as rarely exists between the tones of men and women, without entailing upon the former the charge of effeminacy.

The youth advanced with a graceful step to the sofa, where his father and the nabob were sitting together, and made his compliments to the latter, and his apology for a short absence, with such easy and natural self-possession as bespoke him but little in want of the polish bestowed by such an intimacy with society as his profession affords. There was something in the refinement, and even fashion of his bearing, strangely opposed to the stiff, caustic manners of the old gentleman to whom he addressed himself; and Mr. Randolph watched with a natural anxiety the effect which a sense of inferiority, even in trifles, never fails to produce in a selfish or illiberal mind.

"Either your party is a very easy one, or Miss Forbes's taste is not the most fastidious, since she admits you to a drawing-room in that petticoat," said the nabob, pointing disrespectfully to Julian's philabeg, which, in its dark chequer, and large, heavy folds, personified a Highlander's first ideas of elegance and comfort.

"Nay, then, you are wrong in both conclusions, my kind friend," answered Julian, laughing; "for my party is in the highest degree a ceremonious one; and Miss Forbes's taste is the most delicate matter in the world, and yet it is by her especial command that I appear in the kilt on all such occasions. And now, dear mother, good-night. I will just leap the little hedge, and cut across the park, and be at the foot of the terrace in a minute. Thanks, Katie, you are the very best friend I have."

And, having received his gloves from the gentle sempstress, submitted his plaid to the re-arrangement of his mother's hand, and bidden good-night to both the gentlemen, he left them to the enjoyment of the quietest of domestic evenings.

CHAPTER V.

"Who shall stay you?
My will, not all the world's."
SHAKSPEARE.

KATHERINE had finished her duties at the tea-table, and established her mother and Uncle Fletcher in the quiet game of backgammon, to which, in consideration of the important position which he held in the family, the invalid occasionally condescended in his behalf. She had whiled her father into the romantic window-seat, and placed herself by him to enjoy the soft evening air, and the placid beauty which it gave to nature. There was a little cloud upon his brow even as he gazed out upon the tranquil solitude, and Katherine praised the beauty of the night, and pointed out every interesting feature

in the landscape, without quite arousing his attention to any.

"What are you thinking of, papa?" asked she, at last, after a pause of unusual abstraction.

Mr. Randolph smiled, and drew a long breath as he answered, "I was wondering whether the gay visitors had left Killurie, and thinking that but for them Julian would see a little more clearly the necessity and propriety of devoting his time to your uncle during the short period of his stay at the manse."

"Surely my uncle will not be so unreasonable as to think Julian inattentive," answered Katherine, warmly. "Why, he devotes all his mornings to him without a murmur—trudges with him over hill and dale to all the beautiful points of view in the country, and receives no other encouragement than an occasional 'Humph!' or a remark upon the insignificance of a Highland view when compared to the glories of the Himalaya range! Dear father, it is too much to expect poor Julian to sacrifice his evenings too."

"Our ideas of the sacrifice differ, I perceive," said Mr. Randolph, smiling; "I consider a sacrifice on the shrine of the Lady Ida a much less profitable and meritorious affair than the same offering at Uncle Fletcher's homely altar."

"Do you?" answered she, laughing; "then you reduce poor Julian's legitimate goddess below the vilest of earthly deities, and transfer the devotion of his free spirit to no more elevated a substitute than mammon."

"Nay, if you have come the length of calling this fine lady by the name of Julian's legitimate goddess, I have quite done," answered her father, "and must consider you as fairly in the toils of a fascinated vanity as himself."

"Vanity, dear father!" repeated Katherine, in a proud tone of remonstrance; "surely it needs no great exercise of vanity to believe Julian's attention worthy the acceptance of any lady in the land."

Mr. Randolph smiled at her sisterly warmth.

"Certainly not, Katie; if it is only the value of a little passing homage you are defending, I believe 'ladies of the land,' like this fair ignis fatuus at the castle, are not fastidious as to the quarter from whence it comes; and I dare say that, in these wilds, a worshipper such as Julian is not to be slighted by any means."

Katherine looked a little mortified.

"But if it were even more than a momentary admiration," said she, "why should Julian be called vain in believing it worth Lady Ida's acceptance?"

"My dear Katherine," answered he, in a grave tone, "it is impossible that, with your good sense, you can seriously believe the son of a poor Scottish minister a fitting suitor to the Lady Ida de Mar, only daughter to one of the oldest nobles of the country."

"Well, papa," answered Katherine, blushing slightly at her own pertinacity, "Julian is grandson to a Scottish noble, and is, besides, heir to a larger fortune than many suitors can support their claims withal, be they in what rank they may."

"Aha! so mammon is not unworthy of the cause of the Lady Ida, though quite inadmissible when opposed to her claims," answered Mr. Randolph. "Well, I did not expect to bring

you even so far as to back Julian's pretensions with so sordid an auxiliary. By-and-by I hope to hear you confess the truth, that this despised fortune is the only tenable ground after all; and when you have come this length, you may, perhaps, find that even that is but a slender one."

"What do you mean, father?" asked Katherine, looking up.

"That Uncle Fletcher is a person very unlikely to fling down a handsome fortune to a gentleman who will scarcely give himself the trouble of picking it up," answered Mr. Randolph.

Katherine coloured up to her forehead with the surprise of a new idea, and stood for many minutes plunged in reflection. When she spoke again, her voice shook with its own earnestness.

"There is no hope of making matters better, for Julian is not to be lectured into paying his court anywhere. I have had infinite difficulty already in prevailing on him to devote so much time to Mr. Fletcher as he does. What can we do, papa?"

"Nothing, my dear Katherine," answered he, with a smile, "but leave your brother to the consequences of his own headstrong and selfish pride."

"Dear, dear father!" said Katherine, the tears trembling in her eyes as she spoke, "do not talk so. I have heard you call a similar deportment in others manly independence and integrity. Surely poor Julian is not to be called selfish for neglecting to secure this great advantage. He is only too regardless of his worldly interest—too uncorrupted by the influence of selfish motives—too, too unworldly—uncalculating."

"Too heedless of the future, dear Katherine," said Mr. Randolph; "too idly occupied, and contented with the present moment."

"Well, father, you would not like to see your son, a boy of nineteen, put his kindness out at interest, and speculate with his attentions like a fortune-hunter. Oh, papa, could you bear to see Julian *play his cards* for even such a fortune as Uncle Fletcher's?"

"Nothing is required of Julian which could at all derogate from his self-respect, my dear child," answered Mr. Randolph, mildly. "But do you think, Katherine, that if Mr. Fletcher had come among us a poor man—a solitary, dependant old Indian—that you would have been satisfied with the degree of attention and civility which your brother bestows upon him now?"

"No, father."

"Then, why is Mr. Fletcher to be slighted, merely because Julian is under obligations to him?"

"But I am quite certain, papa, that, if Uncle Fletcher had had no fortune, Julian would have given us no cause to complain; I am sure that, if it were not for this odious paying of court, which disgusts him so much, Julian would be everything to the old gentleman which you or he could desire. You never saw Julian deficient in kindness to the poor and dependant, father?"

"No, my child," answered he, and a shade of softness rested in his eyes and in his voice. "No, I believe that in this confidence you are not mistaken: where Julian is the superior, he is never deficient in gentleness and submission, and it is this very temperament that renders

the advantage of such a fortune as his uncle's of more value to him than to most others."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because, with the feeling of power and independence which the possession of wealth would yield him, this gentleness and consideration for others which we are describing would be in continual operation. Without it there will be no rest for that sensitive and irritable pride which gives its very worst stain to his character. If Julian be a rich man, he will be an ornament to society; if a poor one, he will be either killed in a duel in defence of his independence, or live in a state of perpetual warfare with all on whom he condescends to bestow his fellowship."

Katherine looked as though the prediction had alarmed her, while the importance of securing Uncle Fletcher's favour was in a proportionate degree enhanced. Another long pause of reflection followed, and then she returned to the more important part of the discussion.

"Julian has devoted almost all his time to him; after all, papa, I do not see what should make Mr. Fletcher dissatisfied."

Mr. Randolph smiled.

"Well, father," continued she, replying to the look, "does not Julian every morning propose some new walk, or some plan of amusement for the day? Does he not ride out with him to all the county meetings and half the cattle fairs in the shire? And does he not take him to all the beauties and all the curiosities within twenty miles of us? I am sure poor Julian's time, at all events, is freely expended in his service; is it not, sir?"

"Oh yes," answered her father; "I confess to all this, Katherine. Inattention in these matters can form no part of his offence."

"And what more is necessary?" inquired Katherine.

"Would you consider nothing more necessary to the character of a dutiful and affectionate daughter than the mere fulfilment of the one duty of obedience?" returned Mr. Randolph.

"No, papa, but Julian is not required to perform the duties of a son to Mr. Fletcher."

"True, Katherine; but in discharging the mere obligations of hospitality, Julian does not surely acquit himself of the duty which he owes to such a friend as his uncle. And that perpetual difference of opinion—that constant support of his own views of things, even when confessedly most obnoxious to his uncle's—and the unhesitating preference which he often expresses for matters previously reprehended by Mr. Fletcher, is of all courses the one most likely to lead them soon to a mutual dislike and estrangement. Julian cannot understand that he may be an independent man, and a kind, and respectful, and affectionate nephew, without being a toad-eater."

Katherine sighed despondingly, and offered no farther remonstrance against her father's judgment of the duties of an heir presumptive. She continued for a long time silent; and when she spoke again, it was in a tone of appeal which made her father smile.

"Shall I not call again upon Lady Ida? Shall I not carry out our pretty little scheme for Eelinaskine?"

"Why not?" replied he; "is her ladyship to

be made the scapegoat to bear the punishment of her worshipper's offences?"

"No; but I thought perhaps I had been the means of throwing them together already too much, and—and—"

"Nay, nay," answered Mr. Randolph, laughing, "I am not so much afraid of consequences as to lay an embargo on their meetings; let her ladyship's friends arrange all that; and, as I have never been introduced to this representative of all human perfection, and have, besides, business with the general, I shall walk with you to the castle to-morrow myself."

CHAPTER VI.

"Here comes the countess! Now heaven walks on earth!"
SHAKESPEARE.

THE Eelinaskine scheme was a pretty instance of Katherine's devotion to her brother, and the ingenuity by which she contrived to gratify all his wishes.

Miss Forbes's noble visitors had never partaken of the hospitalities of the manse, except in so far as the rural luncheon which usually crowned a short morning visit might be said to convey them; and it was a pet fancy of Julian's that the party at the castle should be entertained by his family on some occasion of more importance than a mere impromptu.

Katherine knew full well that the habits and inclinations of her mother precluded the possibility of a formal invitation to the manse, even had the organization of the quiet ménage furnished the means of fitting amusement to so gay and fashionable a personage as the lady in whose behalf alone it was desired. Katherine's imagination was awakened, and it soon succeeded in devising and maturing a plan of an entertainment, which suited her own elegant taste and Julian's fastidious one in an equal degree, and held out a promise of being proportionably welcome to the inclination of the anticipated guests.

Eelinaskine was a fairy islet, that looked as if it had dropped from the sky into the centre of the smooth bosom of Loch Urie. A beautiful little gem, covered with rich, mossy turf, it embraced within its narrow precincts just space enough for a pleasant evening stroll among the mimic undulations of hill and valley, the elegant groups of weeping birch and clumps of pine, the waving tufts of lady-fern and lichen-covered masses of stone and crag with which it abounded.

On one of the sharp eminences which rose from Eelinaskine, the ruins of an old monastery had gradually crumbled to decay, leaving nothing but one gable-end standing, in which the tracery of a beautiful Gothic window was very carefully preserved.

The island, it seemed, formed still a part of the church lands. Some strange chance had tacked it to the minister's glebe; and Mr. Randolph and his family, treading in the footsteps of their predecessors, enjoyed the possession of the pretty islet in spite of the undisguised envy of both his hibernal neighbours.

It was the grand event of Julian's boyhood to have assisted Donald the ploughman in the erection of a sylvan bower in the deepest hollow

of Eelinaskine, and in this bower Katherine determined to receive her company.

An old Highland woman, who was her factotum at the manse, agreed to supply excellent tea, by means of a gipsy kettle slung upon a bough; and the youthful hostess judged very naturally that an Arcadian repast under such circumstances would be infinitely more acceptable to the young Lowland patrician than any other species of entertainment which she had it in her power to offer.

A month of dry weather removed all apprehension on the score of cold, &c., and when the question of "What shall we do with ourselves when tea is over?" suggested itself, Katherine could not tell why a portion of Scottish turf, under the influence of so much sunshine, should not be as favourable to the purposes of a sylvan ball as an Italian glade; and calling to mind the gladsome days of her childhood, when she danced reels to the bagpipe on the velvet moss of Eelinaskine, she vowed that the season of such mirth should be recalled, and the pretty natural lawn that fronted the bower be shaven for the occasion.

Julian was directed to drop a few hints of the project at the castle, for the double purpose of sounding the ladies on the subject, and of preventing any other engagement, as it did not suit the simplicity of Katherine's plan to proffer her invitation sooner than one day previous to the sylvan gala.

Julian's report was most encouraging. Miss Forbes was enchanted with the proposal; the general volunteered his presence, with an earnest request to be admitted; and the Lady Ida exhibited her whole stock of slippers, that she might be assured of possessing at least one pair strong enough for a dance on the green.

Katherine's preparations went gayly forward, and were very near their final completion, when, on the evening preceding the important day, she walked over to Killurie. Her father, as he had promised, bore her company; neither could Julian be left behind; and as Mr. Fletcher was not to be prevailed upon to join the party, the usual hour of backgammon was chosen by Katherine's unerring tact, in order that so important a personage might not feel himself deserted.

The party at the castle was assembled in the drawing-room when the three pedestrians arrived, and consisted of General and Miss Forbes, Lady Ida and her chaperone, and a gentleman whom the Randolphs with some difficulty recognised as the son of their neighbour, Lord Inverawe, of whom their hostess announced that he had just returned from Malta, for the purpose of securing his majority in the regiment to which Julian had been appointed.

Miss Forbes was a handsome, middle-aged woman, with an expression of lively intelligence in her face, and a dash of good-humoured satire in her eye, that was both agreeable and becoming. She was deeply engaged talking politics with her father, a tall, noble-looking veteran, with hair as white as moonlight curling on his shoulders.

The gouvernante, with something of the air of a French waiting-maid, was netting a purse beside them, and occasionally edging in a word or two of assent. The young lady and gentleman occupied the farthest corner of the room.

Mr. Randolph turned his mild gaze upon the young patrician, as she was introduced to him, with a sensation of keen interest that could scarcely be guessed from the gentle and placid greeting which he bestowed on her. But Katherine knew "every line and trick" of his countenance too well to fail of appreciating the glance; and there was something in the droop of his eyelash, when his survey was ended, which told her it had not been quite satisfactory.

Lady Ida was very young, not more than sixteen; and certainly, whatever it was which disappointed Mr. Randolph, it could not be either the mould of her features or the tint of her complexion. She was a dazzling specimen of the true style of Saxon beauty. Nothing could be more refinedly indicative of high birth than the cast of her small head, the chiselling of her proud, delicate features, and the alabaster curve of her stately throat. There was something in her bearing which told you that pride was more to her than an inheritance; yet it might be, after all, but the pride of beauty, for there was nothing imperious in the carriage of that little head, which turned from side to side like a bird's, while she made her observations on those around her with such a mute, yet eloquent glitter of her clear, bright eye, as we have seen a Virginian nightingale flash upon us from its gilded cage.

Ida's mouth was the tiniest of human mouths; it looked, even when open, no bigger than the bud of a dog-rose; and her smile was that beautiful, little, curling, polished smile, which expresses just what the smiler pleases, and no more. The creature, even at her delicate and tender age, looked as if her nursery had been a court, and that dignity and stateliness of bearing were hers by nature and right; for there was nothing tutored or forced in her deportment, not a taint of artifice, not a shade of affectation; you read her history and her position at a glance; she was the only child of a rich earl, and had, besides, an independent fortune at her own disposal. She was, of course, not yet come out, but, during her father's absence from home, had been permitted to visit Miss Forbes under the surveillance of her chaperone, Mrs. Fortescue.

Lady Ida had over-fatigued herself with riding in the morning, and was half lying in a listless attitude on a sofa, beside which Major Moira was seated on a low stool, playing the agreeable with all his might. She had only half risen when Mr. Randolph was announced to her, and seemed scarcely to comprehend who he was; but when her eye fell on Julian and Katherine, she held out her hand to them with great cordiality, and the look of weariness and ennui passed away immediately.

"I thought you had forgotten the gipsy ball," said she, with a laugh and a slight blush, when Katherine had announced the object of her visit; and the words having caught Miss Forbes's ear across the room, she turned round and shook her handkerchief at them gayly.

"Well, Katherine," said she, "I have had her little ladyship in a fit of the sullens all this evening, because this *al fresco* at home of yours was still unannounced. I was even endeavouring to persuade Mrs. Fortescue that she ought to withhold her consent, by way of settling matters at once; but since the sun is still shining,

and there has been no mist for a fortnight, why, if Lady Ida will promise to stand between me and her father's wrath, in the event of a flannel lappet greeting his appearance next week, I, for one, shall be rejoiced to risk my Highland nerves in such a fête."

The girlish delight with which the Lady Ida assented to this decision, did not by any means infringe upon the highbred self-possession which distinguished her; but her eyes sparkled with such an expression of gayety when the arrangement was concluded, and she began to question Katherine upon the localities of the beautiful island with an appearance of such genuine interest, that Julian asked himself indignantly who could call her haughty or supercilious.

"I must have you, my dear sir, to give this foolish child the true history of Eelinaskine," said Miss Forbes, as if anxious to bring Mr. Randolph into collision with her youthful guest; "I really will not undertake to answer for all the strange peculiarities with which she has invested it; for, besides her confident expectation of making acquaintance with some Highland tribe of fairies within its precincts, she has a wild legend of the nuns in her foolish brain which she picked up from some of the gardeners, and which has haunted her like a passion, even in its imperfect state, ever since."

"It does look the very home of Poesie and Romance," interposed the Lady Ida, gazing earnestly upon the little isle as it lay in its flowery solitude among the waters, distinctly visible from the windows of the castle: "I shall be very much disappointed if I have not some beautiful remembrance of it to carry away with me."

"There is no lack of legendary interest in Eelinaskine," said Mr. Randolph, smiling. "If the Lady Ida is disposed to favour the superstition, she may carry off an *immortal* memorial of her visit to the isle."

"Ah! yes—they told me," answered she; "but it applied only to *religieuses*—did it not? A mere worldly sentiment cannot be so pre-served."

Mr. Randolph smiled at the simplicity of her enthusiasm.

"Nay, I believe its powers—if we both mean the charm of the Convent Fountain—are not by any circumstances restricted. Its effect is uniformly the same in all the cases which have come under my observation."

The Lady Ida threw back her pretty head—even her romance must be beyond the pale of ridicule. She would not ask another question.

"I believe, however, I can give you the tradition on the best authority," continued Mr. Randolph, indulgently. "The fountain is still a beautiful and most picturesque spring, though its antique basin is sadly dilapidated, and the shell from which the nuns drank of yore has been replaced by Katherine with a large cockle from Loch Uri. It is said that a draught from the miraculous fountain really formed part of the ceremonial of a nun's installation. It was believed to ensure fidelity to her vows both in the spirit and in the letter. None but the favoured votaries of St. Helen were admitted to the benefits of this charmed water in the days of the convent's existence, except, occasionally, widows, who took this means of declaring their

constancy to the memory of their deceased husbands. But many a blooming maiden comes blushing and simpering to Katherine for a bottle of the magical water, to ensure her lover's fidelity, even to this day; and all that they believe wanting to its efficacy is, that it shall be administered when the humour which they wish to perpetuate is at its height."

"I shall certainly administer it to you, Lady Ida," said Katherine, "when you have the first peep of Killurie through the stonework of the old window, on purpose that you may believe forever that there is nothing so beautiful in the whole world besides."

"No," said her little ladyship, resolutely, "nothing should induce me to taste the water. I think the tradition a very poetical one; but nothing should tempt me either to drink it myself, or to give it to those I love."

"Bravo, Lady Ida!" said Major Moira; "*Vive la variété!*"

"Does your ladyship esteem the charm of novelty so much?" asked Mr. Randolph, with a tone of interest.

"No!" said the Lady Ida, scornfully; "no; but fidelity itself is worthless if it have any source but the heart alone."

Julian leaned his head over the back of the sofa to conceal the blush of delight that rose to his forehead, as he met his father's eye bent approvingly on the youthful speaker. Mr. Randolph's smile had something even of surprise in it; and he talked with the Lady Ida more respectfully from that moment.

CHAPTER VII.

"O love will venture in
Whare he daraw weel be seen."

OLD SONG.

A MORNING and noon of surpassing splendour ushered in the evening of Katherine's rural gala, and all things prospered that pertained to it. The little lawn was mowed and swept till it looked like a carpet of Genoa velvet, and the bower dressed with flowers and evergreens till it might have done for the summer drawing-room of Calypso. Piles of fragrant heather were gathered into couches and seats of the most luxuriant device, and at a little distance, removed from them, Elspa's fire of turf and swinging tea-kettle formed a picturesque background to the scene of sylvan gayety.

It was a very classical affair, that bower of Julian's. He had taken the plan from an old print of the Parthenon, and it was surprising how well the pillars of rough pine, and the drapery of honeysuckle, supplied the place of sculptured columns. Then there was the glorious view of nature, to secure which, at every point of most surpassing loveliness, the skill and industry of the young architect had opened among boughs and rocks a long vista; and the edifice, according to its Grecian model, being open on all sides, the more immediate objects of interest in the variety of cliff and cascade, rock and fell, which surrounded it were everywhere abundant.

Nothing could be more beautiful or romantic than the prospect from the upper end of the little temple, where Katherine had placed the tea-table; you stood then fronting the entrance,

with the small, smooth lawn stretched out before you as flat as a billiard-table, and breaking suddenly off into rock, and knoll, and hollow, while the blue, glittering waters, with their ceaseless music of splash and ripple, and their glory of cloud and sunbeam, borrowed from the sky, danced beyond, dividing you from the misty towers of Killurie that crowned the far-off rocks, and, with their picturesque mass of feudal architecture, seemed to bridle in the lake. Nothing could be more beautiful or romantic; and when Katherine, in her white dress and tartan ribands, went tripping about the green, or leaped like a young deer from shingle to shingle, as she hailed Donald with his several messages across the water, she personified, without any exercise of imagination, the presiding nymph of the little Highland Arcadia.

Miss Forbes, with her usual considerate kindness, had in the morning sent over the best produce of the hothouses to the manse; but no one would think of looking at grapes or pine-apples with such magnificent strawberries as Katherine's to oppose them. The cream alone might have put the juice of the grape at a discount in any shape. Then the cakes of every variety of material and device, from the delicate Highland scone, no thicker than cambric paper, to the richest and costliest plum-cake of the town—and the tea, fragrant souchong, that rose upon the air with its aromatic steam, outvying roses and honeysuckles—what produce of the wine-vat could equal these?

No one understood the charm of a real feminine tea-table like Katherine. She knew nothing of the fashionable negligence that offers the "fragrant lymph," with all the glories of its Sevres cup and its tray of silver, cooled in its passage from the butler's pantry, and depending upon your own unskilful admixture for more than half its value. Katherine was too thoroughly domestic in her tastes and habits to fail of excelling in the prettiest grace of the table, the art of tea-making, and the success of her endeavours this evening was sufficiently apparent, when even Uncle Fletcher declared he had never drunk it better in the company of a mandarin.

Everything went on velvet. Mrs. Randolph, wrapped up in the dignity and shelter of her Cachemire, was with some little difficulty beguiled into an appearance of vivacity by the polite tact of the general; Katherine kept Uncle Fletcher in good humour by her excellent tea and her unslumbering attention; while the Lady Ida, in the very radiance of beauty and gayety, amused Mr. Randolph and Miss Forbes by her *piquante naïveté*, and the girlish enjoyment which she extracted from everything around her.

Julian and Major Moira were the attendants upon the tea-table; and when Katherine could spare a moment's attention from the duties of her office, she could perceive that the seat occupied by the ladies of Killurie was to them a point of equal attraction; her feminine keenness in such matters laid the truth before her in a moment, and her sisterly anxiety rendered the rivalry of Julian and his superior officer, even for the space of a single night, a subject of no contemptible interest in her eyes.

"Are you all ready for a draught of the Nun's

C

Fountain, good people?" said Miss Forbes, raising her voice; "are you all disposed to give immortality to the feelings of the moment? No repining against fate—no envy of your best friends—no unhappy loves nor unlucky schemes—no hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness to get rid of ere you approach the brink."

"No headaches nor heartaches," added the general. "I, for one, feel sufficiently pleased with myself and all mankind at this moment, to be quite disposed to perpetuate my present humour."

"And I," said the Lady Ida, in her gay, musical tones, "am so completely enchanted with Elinaskine, that if I drink at the fountain just now, I shall never be happy henceforward anywhere else."

"If the Lady Ida will be contented with its neighbourhood," said the major, gallantly, "it were happy for some of us that she drank just now."

At this moment the music of the bagpipe came wailing from a distance, and the sound was speedily traced to a small boat that seemed making towards the island.

"Here comes our orchestra," said Katherine, gayly; "now, Lady Ida, you are to be initiated into the mysteries of a Scotch reel—just that you may dance yourself fairly into good spirits before we approach the fountain. I will not dispense with one effort at least upon my turf ballroom, if it were only to preserve the original character of my gala."

The piper landed, accompanied by a youth from the servants' hall at Killurie, who was a well-known performer on the clarinet, and our party danced reels and waltzes for half an hour, till the general declared the fairies would never revisit the spot again.

It was a charming scene, and any one standing on the mainland, and seeing from a distance the beautiful islet with its group of dancers, might, with a very slight effort of imagination, have fancied them fairies. To those who stood within the little temple, and looked out upon the beautiful and happy faces, gay apparel, and glancing movements of those without, the scene was a very transcript of some of the most graceful pictures in the *Decameron*.

Katherine, as a matter of course, danced almost constantly with Major Moira; and as she cast occasionally a look of observation on the faces of the group around her, she fancied she could trace a slight sneer upon the pinched and shrivelled physiognomy of Uncle Fletcher, as his eyes followed the motions of Julian and his partner in the dance, or watched the young man's very evident devotion when it was ended. In a moment she had despatched Elspa with drams of whiskey to the musicians, and made up a party to examine the view from the Gothic window, and to drink at last from the Nun's Fountain.

"Shall we go with them?" said Julian to his companion, as the last of the party passed them on their progress up the brae. "We shall have time to make our visit to the fountain and be back again before they leave the window—unless, indeed, you would prefer going there with all these people."

The Lady Ida hesitated.

"It is so very wild and desolate, that I think

you will like it better without a crowd," pursued the gentleman, in the most indifferent tone imaginable.

"So I shall," decided she; and the next moment they were together in the small shadowy path which led by a new and unfrequented way to the Nun's Fountain.

"You have, of course, been often here before," said the lady; "there can be nothing left for you to perpetuate."

"There is certainly no need of a magical draught to give immortality to my present feelings," answered Julian. "It is to see you drink that I am most anxious."

"Indeed!" answered the Lady Ida, flinging back her head haughtily; "which of my feelings would you desire to perpetuate?"

Julian blushed over the temples, and his black eye flashed upon her with a glance that made her own, proud as it was, sink under it.

"You said you were pleased with Eelinaskine, and five minutes ago you told me that you would not soon forget this evening; think you I have no interest in prolonging the remembrance?"

She looked appeased, and answered, with a smile, that she would be happy to retain the memory of her enjoyment forever.

A few moments of silence brought them to the brink of the well. It was surrounded by high, massive trees, in the middle of a solitary glade, so small that Julian's plaid could almost have reached across it. The place was wild and lonely, and as the boy and girl emerged from the narrow path, and stepped upon the dark green turf, there was something in the twilight of the thick boughs and in the deep, breathless silence, broken only by the beating of their own hearts, that kept them both speechless.

They walked forward to the brink of the fountain, and gazed down upon it as it lay dark, and limpid, and motionless at their feet.

"You must listen to me a moment before you drink," said Julian; and the girl looked up to him inquiringly, with a cheek white and an eye glittering with excitement. There was something in the deep, passionate calm of his look and tone that spoke unconsciously to the feelings within, and kept her silent.

"If one were to swear before you that the very heart within his breast were yours—that the life that warmed his veins were only valuable so far as he might spend it in your service—that the toil and the struggle of a lifetime would be well repaid by a look of kindness—that the proudest, dearest happiness of earth would be to die, that you might be saved a pang—if you were to know that this worship was as deathless as the soul that nourished it, would you think that—that—that *thanks* were too much to bestow upon the giver?"

The beautiful girl drew her breath keenly, and pressed both hands upon her breast without speaking.

"Lady," said Julian, as he fell upon his knee beside the spring—and there was that in his accents which thrilled every vein of the hearer—"the blood that warms me is not more vital than the love with which I worship you. I would toil throughout the life that is unspent, even in the bowels of the earth, so I might but hope to die beside you at last. Lady! beautiful Ida! I want nothing from you—not even

hope, which comes to all—say only that you accept my love, whether it may ever be returned or no; say only, 'Julian, you may serve me,' and I will bless you before heaven as I kneel."

The boy's face was turned up to her, pale and spiritualized like that of a young priest in the rapture of a nobler worship, and its touching and most poetic beauty acted upon the heart of his youthful idol like some holy spell. The pride of her high birth and of her womanly timidity fled before it, and she sank upon her knees beside him, and, placing her small clasped hands within his, looked into his face with a gaze in which all else was quenched but the pure, fervent enthusiasm of the moment.

The next instant the sound of voices was heard among the trees, and before either of the two had time to start upon their feet, Major Moira from the one side, and Uncle Fletcher from the other, stepped beside them on the sward.

"So the spirit of the fountain must be invoked kneeling," said the major, with a keen glance, "and admits but two votaries at a time! or, perhaps, your ladyship is not to be considered in the light of a votary;" and he looked from her to Julian with a glance of insolent sarcasm.

The Lady Ida was not one to bear such treatment with meekness; she threw back her fine head with an air of the utmost disdain, and replied,

"The light in which Major Moira may be disposed to consider me, is a matter of too little importance for an argument."

And while Julian was covering his face with his hand, and leaning beside a tree to recall his wandering senses, she was busily assisting Katherine to dispense the water to all who asked for it.

It was a scene of much noise and merriment, and the beautiful glade soon lost the thrilling spell of its solitude.

"Now, Lady Ida, you and I must not be forgotten," said Katherine, when the others were retreating; "you will immortalize your remembrance of Eelinaskine, will you not?"

The colour came back for the time to Ida's cheek as she replied, "I shall not drink of the water," in a tone which silenced Katherine, she could not tell exactly why.

"Well, Julian, are you equally determined?"

Julian advanced, and, plunging in the shell, drank off its contents without lifting up his eyes.

"Do you think it impossible you may ever repent that draught?" asked a voice, as the two ladies were moving away, which Julian recognised with a start as that of Uncle Fletcher.

"Yes, quite impossible," replied he, hastily.

The old man smiled a grim, sardonic sort of smile as he replied,

"Then an ensign, with the king's pay for his fortune, is a better match for the daughter of a rich earl, than a Scottish minister has proved for the grandchild of a poor marquis."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Our daddy is a cankered carle."

SCOTCH SONG.

WHEN Katherine laid her head upon her pillow on the night of this gala day, a strange mix-

ture of ideas kept her brain busy, and herself sleepless. Julian loved the Lady Ida, that was quite unquestionable; loved her with all the deep-seated and strong enthusiasm of his nature; and Katherine, who knew the heart of her twin-brother better than all the world, almost wept as she called to mind the unchangeable fidelity of his affections. He might be wild, volatile, and unstable in his tastes and habits; but in all that related to the heart, Julian was a proverb of steadfast constancy: and her sisterly partiality was insufficient to hide from Katherine the probable anguish that was in store for him, in an attachment so placed and of such a nature. How the lady regarded him she had no means of judging; but the fastidious and aristocratic notions which on more than one occasion she had heard her express, whispered to Katherine that the princely fortune to which Julian was looking forward would all be necessary to wipe away the remembrance of his obscure birth. And poor Katherine felt her heart die within her at the bare remembrance of Major Moira's pretensions; which, even if discouraged by the Lady Ida, could not fail to create a feeling of rivalry and opposition between Julian and his superior officer, obviously tending to the disadvantage of the former.

On the other hand, Julian's attentions to the youthful beauty were palpably distasteful to Uncle Fletcher; whether from a mean and petty jealousy of his young relative's assiduities, or from an habitual prejudice against rank and fashion, and pretensions of every description, was uncertain; but that he looked with contempt and ridicule upon Julian's devotion, she could not but perceive; and the tears fell heavily as Katherine reflected that her darling brother was sacrificing every prospect in life for the sake of one who might not love him after all.

Morning brought its accustomed renovation to poor Katherine's worn-out energies, and by seven o'clock she was abroad, as usual, upon her little visits of charity, or her morning stroll among the braes. The sun was shining merrily, and it gilded the future with so fair a promise to her imagination, that she would not permit herself to believe in any decree of fortune that seemed adverse to the dearest hopes of her life.

Lady Ida was soon to leave the castle; Miss Forbes was every day looking for the earl to carry her away in person. After she was gone, Julian must be all that could be wished to his uncle; and when his good-will was fairly established, even Lady Ida would be tolerated for Julian's sake; and then, when the extent of his splendid fortune was known to the world, Julian must soon be considered on a footing with the noblest among them; and then—and then—everything would be right at last, and she would learn to laugh at the fears of the previous night.

These bright-coloured reveries were interrupted by Uncle Fletcher in *propria persona*, who was suddenly revealed to Katherine by a turn of the path.

"Good-morning, my dear sir," said she, in a blithe tone; "I am glad to see you so early abroad. I hope our rural dissipation has not disturbed your slumbers."

"Humph! I am very well, I thank you. I have had a walk of ten miles this morning," answered the old man. He was on all occasions exceedingly good-humoured and kind to Kathe-

rine, but this morning she detected a tone of unusual self-complacency, almost amounting to triumph, in his address; and concluding it to be in consequence of his morning's achievement, she answered in a corresponding accent of surprise and congratulation, inquiring with great interest as to the point whither his steps had been directed.

"I went as far as the village, to order a post-chaise at two o'clock to-day," was the reply, at the portentous import of which Katherine's heart quaked; but she gathered all her courage, and exclaimed in a laughing tone,

"A postchaise at Killurie! why, my dear uncle, you might as well expect to find a Paris diligence there!"

"No, as good luck would have it, I found one had arrived last night from Inverness: so you see folks may be lucky without being wise."

And he settled himself in his clothes with the self-satisfied sort of motion which people sometimes use who have matters triumphantly their own way.

"Indeed, uncle, I think it is neither lucky nor wise to make use of a close, dusty postchaise on a day like this, when both Redgauntlet and Paddy are in the paddock doing nothing, besides my own pony, which you like so much. What has made you fancy a drive to-day, sir?"

"I am going to drive as far as Edinburgh," answered the nabob, dryly; "your pony could scarcely carry me that length, I imagine!"

"To Edinburgh, sir!" repeated Katherine, and her heart sank. "It is a very sudden journey, uncle—I hope no unpleasant business calls you away so hastily?"

"No," was the cool rejoinder: "only a confirmation of what I had been suspecting."

"Dear, dear! papa will be sadly disappointed," said Katherine. "Could you not arrange your business by letter, sir? It will grieve us all to lose you after so short a visit; and Julian with his six weeks' leave expressly to spend with you."

"Yes, I am sorry to disappoint him," replied Mr. Fletcher, with a grin; "I suspect he will scarcely get through the remaining two without me."

"Then do stay with us," persisted she, in a coaxing voice. "Could not this troublesome business stand for a week or two?"

"No," said he, bluntly; "my business is not often of a nature to stand over, Miss Randolph."

There was something in the old man's tone which, when joined to her own suspicions of the true cause of this sudden journey, silenced Katherine in spite of herself; and although, on ordinary occasions, brave enough to dive immediately into the hidden springs of his bad humour, and allay it by the influence of her blithe and playful kindness, yet to-day Katherine's words all deserted her, and she was totally unable to command another remonstrance.

"You are walking in the opposite direction," said Mr. Fletcher, with sudden politeness; "and, as I shall have some arrangements to make, I may as well be moving homeward."

Katherine was unable even to propose walking home with him; and in a few minutes his usual brisk, business-like pace had taken him out of sight.

She was scarcely recovered from the surprise and discomfort which this short interview had occasioned her, when she descried Julian at a considerable distance on horseback, and leaving

the narrow footpath, she descended the hill to intercept him on the road. He dismounted when they met, and led his horse by her side. He was the image of fatigue and excitement, with pale cheeks and disordered hair, and his dress was covered with dust and soil, as if he had just concluded a long and furious ride.

"Where have you been, dearest Julian?" said she. "All the world seems abroad this morning. You must have had as long a journey as Uncle Fletcher, judging from the plight of yourself and your steed. Where have you been?"

"I have been to Inverhaggernie," answered he; "I was afraid that Keith might have returned, and, as I am to be engaged through the day, I thought to have made my visit to him before breakfast. But he is not come, so I have had my ride for nothing."

"To Inverhaggernie!" repeated Katherine; "thirty miles before nine o'clock! And how tired you look! What could induce you to ride so far? and what is to occupy you in the forenoon, to prevent your visiting Keith at the proper time?"

"Why," said Julian, hesitating, "I must be at Killurie in the forenoon; Miss Forbes expected Lord de Mar last night, and, as he is the colonel of my regiment, I must call on him before he goes."

"For Heaven's sake, my dear Julian, do not leave the manse to-day," said Katherine, in a tone of distress; "it is absolutely necessary that you endeavour to bring Uncle Fletcher into good-humour by some means or other, for he has just announced his intention of leaving Killurie at two o'clock; and if he goes from us in a pet, I know not what will be the consequence."

Julian inquired hastily what she meant; and the whole detail of her interview with the nabob—her own suspicions, and the danger which threatened his prospects, were laid before him, with many tears, and strong appeals to his reason and his prudence.

He heard all that she had to say in silence, and then, with a flushed cheek and a dilating nostril, exclaimed,

"Let him keep his trash! I care nothing for it—am I going to make myself a slave in mind and body to secure his paltry dross? I care nothing for money—I have my sword, thank Heaven, and my father—it shall make me a name, and that is all that I desire in life."

"But, Julian—dear Julian," remonstrated Katherine, "remember papa—think how it will grieve him to see you wilfully offend the old man; and mamma, too—it will break her heart if you forfeit this inheritance. Dearest Julian, consider—it is but a little while longer, even if he should be induced to stay; but if he goes to-day, you must not, indeed, leave him at all. Dear brother, this is a small sacrifice to make for us all."

"Small sacrifice!" repeated Julian, indignant; "my last visit! I would not resign it, though his whole fortune were the penalty—Katherine, do not ask me this as a favour, for I never refused you anything before, and I cannot do this."

"Do not say so, Julian; you must do it, and you will," said Katherine, earnestly; "you can make your visit to the castle after he is gone, and I will not let you leave me till you have promised not to go before."

"I cannot," persisted Julian; "they also depart at two, and my visit must be made by twelve."

Katherine was silent for a few moments, then said very gravely,

"Well, Julian, you know best which will eventually be the greatest sacrifice; I have no means to use but my entreaties."

"Dearest Katherine, do not ask me, do not expect me to give up this," said Julian, in a passionate tone; "there is no price that I would not pay to ensure my visit to Killurie this morning. I promise faithfully to be home before the old gentleman takes leave. I will attend upon him all the day except that one half hour; I will be as submissive and as tractable as you can desire, and he will not have time to miss me before I am back again. Dear Katherine, you cannot love me, and require such a sacrifice as this."

Katherine's heart bled at the sound of his voice, and, with her usual incapacity to resist such appeals, she promised her utmost assistance to purloin the half hour from the exacting old man. They walked home together, and she endeavoured, by talking cheerfully and affectionately, to beguile his haggard and careworn countenance of some of its clouds; and then hurrying him off to his toilet, she went to seek her father, and to ascertain whether Uncle Fletcher's plans had yet been made public.

CHAPTER IX.

"This man hath marred his fortune."
SHAKSPEARE.

NOTHING could exceed the winning cordiality of Julian's deportment at the breakfast-table. His manners were the personification of grace and gentleness; and there was an affectionate and deferential respect in his bearing towards the old gentleman, which Katherine felt assured must be quite irresistible.

The boy's whole deportment seemed under some softening and restraining influence, and the paleness of his cheek, and the low, subdued tone of his voice, were probably not without their uses in producing the effect which was very soon discernible.

There is an indescribable charm in the influence of natural refinement, which the most rugged temper cannot resist. Even Uncle Fletcher's was not altogether inaccessible to it; and the better Julian's exertions succeeded in removing the slight *gêne* with which the party at first assembled, the easier became the task of discharging his own duty with becoming *empresement*.

The old gentleman's resolution to depart, however, was quite unalterable; and Julian, after the first commonplace entreaties, had too much tact to press the subject of his stay.

"You have not been in Edinburgh for many years, uncle," said he, in a quiet tone, "and will, I dare say, be almost bewildered by the changes you will see in the town. I should enjoy escorting you there exceedingly. Perhaps you will let me join you next week for a few days?"

Mr. Fletcher was evidently pleased at this proposal, although he did not immediately accept it; and Katherine could see that his cordiality towards Julian increased from the time that it was made.

Mr. Randolph seconded his son's plan, and much friendly and agreeable discussion passed between them on the subject of the proposed expedition; for Julian was, in truth, generosity

itself; there was not one stain of selfishness upon his heart; and though circumstances had made him neglect the duties imposed on him by the position in which he stood towards his uncle, yet he was ready, as usual, on the impulse of the moment, to devote himself as entirely to the old man's comfort and convenience as if there had been no other object for him in life.

Katherine saw that his warmth made its own way with the nabob. The latter was too self-sufficient and exacting to search very far into the motives for kindness of which he himself reaped the benefit, while his pride was too much flattered by the devotion of Julian's time and services to his convenience to allow so much as a suspicion to arise that they were given on the instigation of others, or at the suggestion of duty or expedience.

Everything was going on well, and Katherine, to her infinite delight, foresaw that they were at least to part in amity. Julian proposed to accompany his uncle as far as the village, and at half past twelve he went to give orders that his horse should meet him there at three.

Katherine's heart beat when he closed the door, for she knew very well that his errand was farther off than the stables, and she hurried after him to impress upon him the heavy consequences which hung upon his discretion this day.

"Remember that I would not tell even papa where you are going," said the devoted sister. "Dear Julian, come back soon—do not stay more than half an hour. I feel as if the whole augury of your fate hung upon this day."

"I feel that it does, dear Katherine," answered he, with a wild smile, that sent her back to the parlour with a pang at her heart.

Katherine's best energies were now in exercise to amuse and occupy the old gentleman, and, if possible, to prevent him from feeling the absence of Julian until he should return. A thousand little matters were remembered or invented at the moment, upon which Uncle Fletcher's sudden departure made it necessary to consult him without loss of time. There was a view of the principal church in Calcutta to be improved by an alteration which he had suggested—a valuable hint for the heightening of water colours, which his mercantile knowledge of their properties had supplied, to be rehearsed—a recipe for pillau to be written down—a new mode of infusing coffee to be learned, and the address of a tea-merchant to be taken, who, as a correspondent of Mr. Fletcher's, must, as a matter of course, be the very foremost in the trade.

Katherine had a natural tact, which the amiable and considerate bent of her disposition rendered particularly acute, and which led her at once to the weak side of those with whom she associated, without any intention whatever of falling into the meanness of flattery. Accordingly, Mr. Fletcher was charmed by the sort of consequence which her little consultations reflected upon him, and Katherine made the trifling benefits conferred upon her a matter of such serious importance, and apologized so often for the trouble she was occasioning, that the old man very soon became interested in his own benefactions.

Mr. Randolph seconded her endeavours with the good-humoured spirit that prompted them, and an hour was quickly whiled away, during which Julian was not inquired for, and Katherine's manœuvring was entirely successful.

At half past one, however, it became absolutely necessary to order luncheon, because Mr.

Fletcher was punctuality itself, and would rather have departed fasting than put off his journey by the space of five minutes. Katherine moved about, talking all the while, and trying to persuade the old gentleman that she could not dispense with his presence during the winter months. She arranged all the trifling adjuncts of the table, which she knew to be agreeable to him, with her own hand; and when he drew out his watch, and looked with a fidgety motion out of the window, she took heart in consideration of the time that was already gone, and herself wondered "what could possibly detain Julian so long."

"I hope he will not forget his hour of starting," answered the old man, a little testily; "a soldier ought to know the importance of punctuality."

"Where has he gone, Katherine?" asked her father. "He cannot surely be all this time at the stable."

Poor Katherine turned pale as she answered with a pardonable evasion of the inquiry,

"He is very careful of Redgauntlet, you know, papa—he always sees him groomed; and he has had a long ride this morning already—he was at Inverhaggernie before breakfast."

"Ah! that was in consequence of your proposal to fish to-day," said Mr. Randolph; and, having been made sensible of the distance which his nephew had travelled to despatch his own business, that it might not interfere with his, Mr. Fletcher looked once more smooth and pacified, and Katherine left the room to inquire for the truant.

There were no tidings of him, and she despatched the little groom-boy across the fields to the castle, with a hasty summons, written in pencil, to her brother. Time and tide, however, preserved their ordinary independence of all men's movements, and Mr. Randolph rang the bell himself for luncheon ere Katherine's messenger could have performed the shortest half of his journey. But the act of sending him had served to quiet her anxiety, and she kept assuring herself that Julian would be on his way before the note could reach him. She talked and laughed with the gentlemen till her mother entered, and then it was no longer possible to defer sitting down.

"Did you send to tell Julian that we were waiting for him?" said Mr. Randolph.

"Yes, papa," replied Katherine, boldly; "but he has scarcely time to be here yet."

"Julian has gone to the castle, I presume," said his mother, with her usual violation of all expediencies. "I saw him go across the fields an hour ago."

"That must be quite impossible," answered Mr. Randolph. "He knew his uncle's hour of starting; and he would not think of going so far away at this hour."

"Yes, I am pretty certain he is at Killurie," persisted the lady; "I heard him promise Miss Forbes last night that he should pay his respects this morning to Lord de Mar. Of course he considers it indispensable to wait upon the colonel of his regiment."

Mr. Fletcher fidgeted on his chair, and gave the sort of dry, short cough which was the unfailing index of his displeasure. Mr. Randolph looked keenly at Katherine, and then dropped his eye as he beheld her changing colour. At that moment Mr. Fletcher's postchaise drove to the door, and Katherine looked with a sick heart out of the opposite window towards Killurie; but

there was no trace of Julian, and the lunch proceeded till Uncle Fletcher had drunk his last glass of sherry, and rose from his seat, saying, "You will give my respects to Ensign Randolph, and say that when his engagements leave him at liberty, I shall be happy to meet with him."

"You will not go without him, my dear sir?" said Mr. Randolph, with an expression of great annoyance in his face. "He must be here in a few minutes now."

"I have no expectation of it," answered the old man, with his bitterest grin; "my Lord de Mar is not to be despatched with a morning visit of an hour and a half."

Mr. Fletcher's luggage was carried out—his greatcoat buttoned, and his adieus to Mrs. Randolph in the act of being spoken. Katherine was at her wits' end:

"Dear, dear uncle, you must wait a little for Julian. He will break his heart if you go off in this cheerless way without him. Do wait, Uncle Fletcher, if it be only five minutes."

"I have waited five minutes already, Miss Randolph," replied the nabob, determinedly, "and I was never known to wait so long for any man before. I hope your brother will improve in punctuality before he comes to require it in the time of action, or he bids fair to lose his reputation, which he probably considers a matter of more importance than anything that may hang upon his present engagement."

And with another of his sour smiles, Mr. Fletcher shook hands with Katherine and her father, stepped across the hall and into the carriage with his brisk motion that no human influence ever impeded, and rattled down the little avenue and along the road, while Katherine stood motionless, the tears gathering in her eyes, till he was out of sight. The chaise had barely rounded the last turn of the road which was visible from the windows, when Katherine recognised the figure of Julian flying through the shrubbery, at the top of his speed, towards the house.

CHAPTER X.

"Yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot."—WORDSWORTH.

THE moon was shedding her mystic and spiritual radiance over a narrow Highland strath of most surpassing beauty, as a solitary horseman turned the abrupt angle of the road which brought him to the entrance of the defile. To those who are already familiar with the sublimity of a Highland moonlight, one breath upon the chords of memory will recall such a scene as I would fain describe; to communicate it to the imagination of those who are ignorant of the reality, all the energies of the writer may be exercised in vain.

It was a small and narrow valley, with a range of glorious mountains on either hand, piled one upon another, till their cragged and broken outline seemed to touch the skies, and lent to the beautiful and smiling glen an aspect of even unusual solitude. At one or two points in the short stretch which the vale afforded, the hills seemed to recede from one another, forming small vistas, which, though all were connected with the larger strath by one common circle of mountains, severally revealed a wild hamlet

with its knolls and its pine-trees, its silver stream, and its own peculiar boundary.

There is something in these broken glimpses which gives an exquisite variety to a Highland picture; and in this case, without breaking in upon the seclusion, or diverting the eye from the nobler prospect before it, the little outshots, as it were, from the vale lent to the whole scene an interest of a peculiarly sweet and touching character. The glen itself was watered by a wandering stream, that roamed hither and thither among the meadows, and gave its plaintive music to the night, while the fair and velvet sward was rolled backward to the bases of the hills, with never a slope until it joined their very roots; and the shaven fields left ample space for the mysterious shadow of fairy knoll and gnarled wych-elm, which here and there the moonlight flung across the glen, till it seemed peopled with wizard shapes.

The traveller to whom we have alluded rode along with a quiet and deliberate pace through every winding of the simple mountain-road, till the upper end of the valley was gained, and the fairest picture which it afforded was spread out before him. A small and quiet loch lay sleeping under the shadow of two long lines of hills, which fell with a sheer and most graceful outline to its margin, fronting each other in opposing masses of rock and promontory, and lessening and lessening till they were closed at last by the purple masses of a separate and intersecting range.

Near the margin of this loch, where the flat meadow-ground lay undulating into brae and hollow, where the pines were gathered into clumps, and the woods took a richer and more massive umbrage, a handsome and picturesque mansion-house was reared upon the summit of a lawn that sloped almost imperceptibly to the waters. There was something fanciful in the architecture of the house, with its strange blending of English and Gothic taste, as if the mind that planned it had been whimsical and imaginative in its character, and yet the building was in perfect keeping with the beauty of its site, and rather confirmed than infringed upon the effect of the noble scenery by which it was surrounded.

There were magnificent beeches, and black, massive plane-trees grouped upon the lawn, yet a certain air of neglect was visible in the rushes that overgrew the sward, and in the breaches of the stone balustrade that ran along the terraced front nearest to the loch. Indeed, an atmosphere of desolation brooded over the place, for an unbroken silence enveloped it; and darkened windows, and the absence of all ordinary signs of domestic activity, seemed in very unison with the pale and melancholy light that streamed around.

The moon hung like a lamp of heaven in the dark blue vault between the summits of the opposing hills, and flung her white shimmering radiance on the water, while the tall chimneys, and the arched and pointed roof of the house, were just silvered with the beams that rested on their tips. All around the house besides was wrapped in the glorious shadow of the woods and mountains.

The traveller drew his rein as he crossed the rude bridge that spanned the river at its source, and rested for a moment with his gaze fixed upon the beautiful majesty of Nature. It was a lovely scene, just such a home as one who knew

the poetry of life would wish to live and die in, and never breathe a sigh for other distinction than that of possessing it.

The traveller was a man of seven or eight-and-twenty, with a handsome, intelligent face, and a mien and carriage which bespoke him a Scottish gentleman from many generations. There were strong sense and manliness of character in his countenance, though now and then it contracted with an expression of deep anxiety, and even care, like that of a man habituated to earnest and important calculations.

During his momentary pause upon the bridge, a variety of feelings seemed to succeed each other within his breast; for he looked first with a gaze of pride and affection upon his home, then an expression of steadfast determination came over his countenance, which in its turn gave place to the restless and unquiet glance that never fails to speak of care and perplexity.

But the moment of hesitation soon passed, and he spurred rapidly onward; and, passing by the gate of entrance, rode round the house. He alighted at the back premises, where an old Highlander, that might have personated the last remaining lackey of Wolf's Crag, strode sturdily across the court, and, doffing his bonnet with a hearty salutation in Gaelic, took his master's horse, and led him into a large, empty stable, of which he was the sole occupant.

The gentleman himself, after a few words of kindness, and a charge regarding the comfort of his wornout steed, retraced his steps to the front of the house, and let himself in without ringing.

The hall was handsome and well proportioned, and furnished with something of the curious and fanciful taste manifested in the exterior of the building; for trophies of war and reliques of superstition were mingled with the more modern spoils of the chase, in an order of arrangement which pleased and interested, while it amused the eye of a stranger.

A noble staircase, elaborately carved and painted, led the master of the house into a spacious gallery, hung with pictures of every size and character, and ornamented with statuary, which occupied niches or pedestals on either hand.

The corridor was in darkness, except from a single lamp, that burned with a feeble and desolate glimmer at the farther end, and barely served to guide him to a door in its immediate neighbourhood, which he opened with a noiseless touch, and closed behind him.

The scene which immediately greeted him was strikingly in accordance with all through which he had as yet passed. He entered a small parlour, that had evidently been intended as a lady's boudoir, or some such dainty and elegant retreat; for the walls were hung with silk, and the mantelpiece was formed of glittering spar; but there was a want of keeping in the adjuncts of the room, and an air of disuse about the various finery which it contained, that seemed to indicate its long misapplication to the purposes for which it was intended.

A fire of burned-out logs, glowing duskily in the grate, was all the light which the room could boast; but it sufficed to reveal the figure of a young lady in deep mourning, bending listlessly over the hearth, with the air of one who finds her own thoughts too engrossing to admit of any attention to the state of things around her.

The first step of the intruder roused her, and she sprang up with a start of joyful surprise, and exclaimed,

"Keith! my dear brother, is it you at last?" She was considerably younger than he, but pale, and thin, and worn, as if by long illness; and her hair, which bore the very tint of undyed silk, and was drawn tightly across her forehead, revealed her colourless and attenuated features, which the contrast of her black dress rendered only the more mournful.

The gentleman kissed her affectionately, and returned her salutation in a cheerful tone.

"Why, truly you will need all my assurances to convince you that it is I, for there is no judging for yourself in this darkness visible. What makes you sit here moping over the embers, like a crow in a mist? No wonder that you have dismal fancies. Is this keeping your promise to me, you little wayward thing?"

And he bent down as he spoke, and lighted the lamp which stood upon the table. "There! now let me see what you have been about since I left you."

He looked into her face with an air of kind solicitude; then the cloud came over his forehead, and he shook his head, and turned away reproachfully.

"Ah! Marion, Marion, if this is the way I am to find you after every absence, how can I answer to my conscience for leaving you at all?"

"I am quite well, dearest Keith," answered the girl, smiling. "Remember how late it is; I am wearied watching for you. Wait till the daylight, and you will see how strong I look. You shall not scold me to-night, for I am determined to be quite happy, and to hear of nothing but your journey. There! ring for Margery and the supper-tray, and then open your budget. I am almost tired waiting for it. Not a human face have I seen since you left me, and very little have I thought of but yourself and your mission."

"What!" answered the gentleman, "alone all the week! Has no one from Killurie been here? and have you been a prisoner for eight days?"

"Julian came this morning before I was down stairs; but when he learned you were still absent, he rode off again without dismounting. And Katherine has sent me two notes; but she is so much engaged with Mr. Fletcher and the fashionables at the castle, that she had not a single day to spare. I know she would have come to me if she could."

"God help you, poor thing!" said he, half unconsciously. "You are desolate enough at present; what will your life be if—"

"If what, dearest Keith?" asked the girl, anxiously. "Has Lord de Mar accepted of your arrangement, and are we to be separated at last?"

"Lord de Mar has accepted of nothing, Marion. We are as destitute, as dependent upon ourselves, and, thank Heaven, as independent of others, as before this hopeless errand of mine was performed."

He looked moodily when his sentence was finished; and, though a slight expression of relief was visible on the face of his companion, she did not answer, and shortly after he resumed of his own accord.

"It is a strange new position for me, that of a supplicant. I have been too long accustomed to grant favours for the business of asking them to sit well upon me, and I fear the pride of the Chisholms somewhat marred my cause with his lordship."

"Surely there was no necessity to consider yourself in the light of a supplicant," answered

the young lady; "a trifling accommodation from one gentleman to another is no such favour as should be allowed to hurt your pride, dear Keith."

"True, Marion," replied he; "that is our Highland mode of viewing matters; but Lord de Mar considers that his claims upon a man's whole substance may give him a right to look upon that man as his inferior, whatever may be the relative position in which they have been placed by nature. His lordship chooses to reject my proposal of liquidating my father's debts by the fruit of my own labours, and prefers the more direct mode of paying himself by the sale of the property. He is quite right; there is more substantial security in the acres of Inverhaggernie than he can be expected to find in the personal exertions of one who is for the first time called upon to make them in his own behalf. I wish my father's obligation had been incurred to any of his brothers in arms rather than to this haughty earl, for it is impossible for me, at least, to have any dealings with one who knows not how to respect the feelings of a man burdened with difficulties as heavy as they are unexpected. God knows what is in store for us, Marion; but I would toil through a lifetime to redeem our home from the stranger's claim upon it."

The girl wept bitterly. "I know, dear Keith, that if I were not hanging like a weight upon you, Inverhaggernie would soon be free. If you had any asylum for your sick sister, the strength of your own arm and the powers of your own mind would very soon set aside this difficulty. I have been thinking over all this while I was alone, and turning over in my mind the possibility of obtaining a home (for the little time that—that may perhaps suffice) among the many whom our poor father has fed and cherished in his day. I am quite sure that to some of them I should be welcome, and I shall do what I can to save myself from being a burden to any."

The brother was so deeply moved by these forlorn and desolate words, that for a while he had no comfort to offer her; but after a short pause, and a struggle to command himself, he replied, with a cheerful and encouraging tone,

"Pooh, pooh! we are not quite come to that extremity, my humble little sister. The lady of Inverhaggernie is not yet dependant upon a Highland cousin for the bread she eats. No, no; I would sell the place ten times over before it came to that. It would be hard, indeed, if the whole property do not cover the amount of this unhappy mortgage. Wo is me! can a father leave to his son a legacy of heavier care than the load of unacknowledged embarrassments? How little could I have guessed, in those light-hearted days, when I used to plague our poor father by comparing the house that he spent his life in planning and perfecting to that of Ellangowan, which was to take the estate upon its back and fly away with it—how little could I have guessed that the price of that very house was destined to be paid out of the labour of my hands! But come—'twere better to be dumb than to talk thus—I must send you off to bed; and to-morrow, when a sound sleep shall have given you courage to face a bold project, I will tell you a charming proposal of old General Stuart's, whereby Inverhaggernie is to be freed in ten years, and a snug income secured to its possessor besides."

"Nay, I shall have no sound sleep at all with

such a prospect for the morning as that," returned she, smiling wistfully. "You must tell me now, if you mean that I should sleep at all. Do not be afraid of frightening me, dear brother; I can bear anything now."

"Can you?" repeated he, in an anxious and incredulous tone. "What! even to hear that I had accepted a governorship in the West Indies, and that we were to be separated for ten years?"

"Have you accepted it, dear Keith?" asked the girl, in a grave, firm tone, after a momentary pause.

"Suppose I had?" answered the brother, gayly, and with a smile which was scarcely disguise enough to his anxiety.

"It would be the happiest event that could befall me in life," said the girl, determinedly.

"What?" answered he, "that we should be strangers to each other for ten years?"

"No, no, no; you can afford to have me always with you there; I will go too, and die beside you."

"Dearest Marion! that is no part of my plan—the climate of the tropics is not for such as you; you must stay at home, and keep house here for me, with Donald and Margery."

"No, brother, there are but two of us, and death will divide us soon enough. Let me live always beside the only living thing that cares for me. Take me with you, dearest Keith, and I shall not have a wish on earth besides unsatisfied."

The brother looked at her with an expression of distress and perplexity.

"My dear sister, this cannot be. Your health cannot stand the change of climate; and if it suffer, I shall never recover the self-reproach. You must stay at home, and nurse yourself into health and happiness, before I return, to live and die with you at Inverhaggernie."

"Keith," said the girl, in a composed and steadfast tone, "if you leave me behind you, even at Inverhaggernie, I shall not survive the separation twelve months; we shall never meet again, and there will be none to lay my head in the dust. If you take me with you, it is just possible that the change you dread may be of service to me; and if not, I shall close my eyes in peace, and you will bring my bones back again to sleep at home. Dearest Keith, do not contradict me, but believe that I did not dare to hope for any termination of my fears half so happy—so perfectly satisfactory as this. Let me go, and all my troubles will be over."

His eyes glistened for a moment, and he struggled a second time to shake off the feeling which overcame him.

"Well, well, it is too soon to be making up our minds on such an important point," said he, with an effort at cheerfulness. "Many arrangements have to be concluded before this be thought of, and it is not worth while to anticipate the necessity of decision. My appointment is not yet confirmed, and Lord de Mar has to assure me of his concurrence before I can take any step which has for its object the preservation of our home; but, without his approval, that object cannot be attained. You may sleep sound, dear Marion, in the assurance that whatever you really desire most will be what I shall most earnestly seek to promote. And now I must send you off, for these pale cheeks keep pricking my conscience like the sultan's ring. Here, take your candle, and do not let me see your face till nine o'clock to-morrow."

CHAPTER XI.

"There—my blessing with you;
And these few precepts in your memory.
Look thou character."—SHAKSPEARE.

JULIAN RANDOLPH's leave of absence lacked but one fortnight of its expiration, and the last week of the term was to be devoted to Uncle Fletcher in Edinburgh, so that a few days more were all that remained to him of the society of his home. It was a mournful term; for, though Julian had of late spent but a small portion of his time at the manse, yet it was only now, for the first time, that the domestic circle began to feel that he was no longer one of them.

The displeasure and regret with which his father had looked upon his want of punctuality on the morning of Mr. Fletcher's departure had passed away, and every remembrance of his boyish errors seemed to be merged in the affectionate and sorrowful reflection that he was thenceforward to walk under other eyes and other auspices than those which had hitherto watched and shone upon him. Even the thought of the few days which he was to spend in Edinburgh, important as they were to his after fate, seemed almost banished by the weightier consideration of the days, and months, and years of separation which probably would follow.

There is a peculiar character in the sorrow of that parting which untwines for the first time the ties which have heretofore connected the wanderer with his home. Every link, that used to be the strongest and dearest, seems to be severed when a youth steps forth to seek new associations among the haunts of men, while the affection of both him that goes and of those he leaves behind is stamped with an impress which becomes everlasting. Among the forsaken circle there is a bitter consciousness that the beloved object of their care is forever independent of them; that the sweet offices of affection may henceforth be rendered by hands that are unknown to them, and that the reward of gratitude and tenderness, which was wont to be her undivided meed, may be reaped by those of whom they know nothing. And in him who departs, there is a mournful acknowledgment that he is severed from the only love which is beyond the reach of destiny; that he is leaving behind him hearts which can never fail when he calls upon them for sympathy, and which, by sending him from them, appear to withdraw their support, and to require from him the active exercise of those powers which heretofore they seem to have supplied. Moreover, it is then that the distance between parent and child seems annihilated. They mourn for the first time *in common*, and the sweet influences of gratitude and dependence are forgotten in the equality of friendship. The sacrifice of enjoyments which have been to us as the air we breathe, first awakens the conviction of their importance, and at the moment in which we are called upon to resign them, we seem to discover that they were all which had made life desirable.

There was a deep and tender anxiety mingled in Mr. Randolph's grief at the final departure of Julian, which he was at little pains to conceal, conscious that no conceivable restraint could act so effectually upon the wild impulses of such a mind as the check which was supplied by the boy's own affection.

"Remember, Julian," said Mr. Randolph, in his bland and persuasive tones, "remember that

all the worldly happiness of this household depends upon your self-command. If your career be ruled by upright and virtuous resolves, such as I well know to be arranging themselves within your heart at this moment, I shall live and die a happy and a grateful father, even although no brilliant trophies should speak to me of great exploits undertaken and accomplished. Bring back to your innocent and humble home the true and unpolluted heart which you carry from it, and I will not withhold one smile of welcome, though fame and fortune should also remain unchanged. Act towards your uncle, my dear boy, as an affectionate nature dictates. Carry the principle of your duty to God into the most trifling concern in your existence, and never forget that you are fulfilling most acceptably his will when you are promoting the happiness and welfare of his creatures. Let your mother's tenderness, your sister's anxious devotion, and your father's confidence, be the earthly beacons of your path; and remember that I am ready to peril all my hopes upon you, because I feel that they will not be disappointed."

Such words as these made their way straight to the listener's heart, and the feeling that spoke in his flushed cheek and glistening eye was answer enough to the speaker.

It was a bitter week for Katherine. The necessity of supporting her mother imposed the heaviest of all tasks upon her simplicity—that of comforting another with words which her own heart acknowledged to be vain. There were, to be sure, a thousand trifling arrangements to make for the young soldier's comfort, which for a while chased away the heaviest pressure of sorrow, and forced her thoughts into a less dreary channel.

Yet many and many a time would poor Katherine brush aside the tear as her mother's or even her father's footstep sounded near her, and look up to them with a smiling countenance, when she would gladly have hidden her face and wept unseen.

Julian was all the world to her; she had not one thought nor feeling unshared by him: and the happiness of serving him, of restraining his impetuosity, of repairing his mistakes, of warning, advising, and assisting him, of pleading his cause when he was in disgrace, and of promoting and enhancing the honour of his happier moments, seemed to her the very end and aim of her existence. When he left home on any former occasion, it had always been for some understood period, which was generally the great epoch in her year: the day of his return seemed to guide and influence her most commonplace employments, and the solitude which his absence entailed upon her was relieved by the continual remembrance of its limited duration. There was the prospect of a few months, at least, in every year, when he would be once more re-established among them, as regular a member of the household as if he had never left his place vacant; and then she could refer every plan of pleasure or occupation to the period of his residence at Killurie, till she almost forgot that she was meanwhile deprived of her protector and companion.

Now, alas! there was no such hope to draw the sting from separation. Long, dreary months must pass before they could hope to see him, and even then a few short days or weeks would be all that the great business of life could spare for them. She felt that her companion was lost to

her forever, and it required all the pride and promise of his opening prospects to keep her grief within moderate bounds.

The possibility of Julian being ere long ordered on foreign service was what Katherine dared not for a moment contemplate. To one of her inexperienced notions, the present headquarters of the regiment, though no farther off than Brighton, seemed to involve a journey of formidable importance; and when Julian would allude, with the natural spirit of his age, to a speedy prospect of active service, Katherine turned sick and pale, and wished her brother even in the obnoxious counting-house, where no such peril could assail him.

The last day of Julian's sojourn at home at length arrived. Katherine's final arrangement of his baggage was soon concluded, and the remainder of the forenoon was set apart by the brother and sister for a visit of leavetaking to the Chisholms at Inverhaggernie.

It was a cheerless, miserable morning. Marion was so weak and nervous an invalid, that even the excitement of saying good-bye to her old playfellow overset her feeble strength entirely. Julian was flushed and excited by the struggle of different feelings within him; and Katherine, through the tears and smiles that flitted continually over her face, made many an unsuccessful effort to second the kind and gentle cheerfulness of Keith Chisholm.

Julian's anxious inquiries as to when and where they were likely to meet again, did not tend to diminish the sadness of the party.

"Heaven knows, my dear boy," answered Chisholm, with a melancholy smile; "fate may send us far enough apart ere long. But, unless the world affect you differently from what I expect, our whereabouts can never be a matter of indifference to you, and in this assurance I shall never leave you long in ignorance of it."

Katherine saw the soldier's lip tremble for the first time as he wrung the hand of his friend.

"Keith," said Julian, in a tone of deep feeling, "you have been the kindest, truest friend of my boyhood. I pray God that I may never forfeit your regard; for I know that, however far apart our lots are cast, nothing but my own unworthiness can rob me of that."

"God bless you, my boy," answered Chisholm, with a smile; "I am not afraid of you, Julian; you may occasionally bring suffering on yourself, but you will bring happiness at last to all who love you."

Julian kissed Marion's cold white cheek, and walked away, while Keith lifted Katherine, drowned in tears, upon her saddle.

A melancholy ride carried the brother and sister to their home, where it would be useless to follow the latter through the hysterical farewell of his mother, or his father's solemn and affecting benediction. Katherine alone withheld that night her parting embrace. She was not to be forbidden the dear privilege of making Julian's breakfast for the last time at five in the morning, and she felt it an invaluable relief to part with a simple good-night at his chamber door.

Katherine was as yet too unaccustomed to grief to receive from the hour of slumber the solace which it was wont to bring. She laid down her candle, and, burying her face in her hands, gave way to the long pent-up tide that swelled within her heart. It was a bitter burst—perhaps because it was new. She had yet to learn

that there are sadder tears in life's chalice than those which so pure and holy a feeling is calculated to set free.

When she raised her face the silence of midnight was upon the household, and by a strong impulse, which led her unconsciously onward, she softly opened the door of her chamber, stole along the little passage, and in a moment stood by the bedside of her brother. Julian was sound asleep—the curtains were pushed far away from him, and his face was turned towards her, with the starlight of the summer evening full upon it.

Katherine hung yearning over the beautiful and beloved lineaments till her heart swelled with its strong affection. How fresh—how utterly untarnished was the beauty of his face! with the round, full outline, and the warm colouring of its young bloom. There was not one trace of suffering or of strife on the smooth, fair brow or the chiselled mouth. Katherine had seen his eye dimmed with the shadow of tears a thousand times throughout the day; but now, in his calm, innocent sleep, there was not a shade of sorrow; all was peace within—the peace of unpolluted, uninitiated youth.

"God knoweth thy purity, beloved one," said Katherine, as she dropped upon her knees beside him. "May he keep thee and sustain thee, and give thee to us even as thou art!"

The sleeper stirred and smiled, as if her prayer had reached him, and Katherine stole back to her little chamber in peace and hope.

CHAPTER XII.

"Behold your captain!"
SHAKSPEARE.

JULIAN's first letters from Edinburgh were in the highest degree consolatory and enlivening. He had been received by his uncle with every appearance of cordiality, and had escorted him through the wonders and the beauties of the Scottish Athens with a zeal and earnestness of affection which seemed to have effectually banished all unpleasant remembrances connected with Killurie.

The old man had announced his intention of sojourning in the northern metropolis until he should hear of some desirable residence where he might ultimately fix his abode; but he even condescended so far as to intrust Julian with a kind message to his sister, promising an early return to Killurie, and claiming her remembrance of a former promise to visit him when he should have pitched his camp at home.

Julian wrote in high spirits; every cloud seemed to have fled from his horizon, and the smiles of fortune only tended to render him more affectionately mindful of the dear circle at home.

"I shall depart for headquarters to-morrow," said his letter, in conclusion; "and when I am once settled in my barrack-room, do not imagine, dear father, that I shall suffer my existence to be trifled away as a military life so often is in time of peace. I am not likely to forget your maxim, that 'idleness is the only avenue of vice'; and I hope to tell you in my next letter that I have commenced that course of habitual study and application which in mine, as in all other professions, affords the best assurance of eminence and distinction."

Katherine's heart beat lightly at these cheerful and promising words, and at the smile of kind-

ness and approbation with which her father read them over. The pain of absence, the doubts, and fears, and uncertainties of the future were all forgotten. Julian's first step in the world was taken successfully, and the happiness of this conviction shed its radiance upon all the rest.

Katherine sprang up stairs to her mother's room with the letter, in a gayer and more cloudless humour than one little week before she had believed it possible ever to enjoy again. And the house was musical throughout the day with the sounds of her girlish happiness.

Major Moira called next morning to make his adieus at the manse, and to offer his services (as he was about to depart for Brighton) in carrying the commands of the family to his youthful subaltern. The major was a fashionable man of thirty-six or thirty-eight years—not very abundantly supplied with the gifts of Nature, and, by consequence, fully inclined to overvalue those of fortune, with which he had been endowed. His fathers had been lairds of Inverawe for hundreds of years, and, as such, had passed through life with the honour and respectability commonly attached to an old family in the middle ranks. Politics, however, had turned the head of his father, and a peer's coronet was the stake for which, in that game, he had played out the best part of his life. Accordingly, the *Lord* of Inverawe, in turning his back upon the *laird*, and exchanging the comforts and dignities of his moderate station for the upstart importance of a new title, cast aside also the patriarchal bearing proper and natural to a Highland chief, and assumed the hauteur of a senator.

His eldest son, the Honourable Fitzwilliam Angus Moira, was not likely to fail in the due appreciation of the newborn dignities of his house, nor to evince his consciousness of distinction in any way calculated to disprove the nature of his patent of nobility. A lordly condescension to the inferior gentry around, and a parasitical deference to such as were above him in birth or fortune, were the peculiar characteristics of the heir to the new title, and were equally efficacious in rendering him an object of impudent contempt to the lower, and of supercilious indifference to the higher order of his acquaintance; except, indeed, where respect for his father's broad lands on the one hand, and the glare of the new coronet on the other, was of sufficient weight to turn the scale in favour of—not the heir, but his appendages.

Such was Julian's superior officer; and Mr. Randolph augured no good from the influence which he must necessarily exercise over the career of his son. But Katherine saw still deeper into the merits of the case; for the recollection of his jealousy of Julian's success with the Lady Ida de Mar was vividly before her, and she could not rid herself of the impression that with him also it was still present. He was exactly the sort of person to visit the crime of *superiority* with every species of petty revenge in his power; and there was something in his tone of patronising condescension while speaking of Julian, which, while it was intended to convince the listeners of the total impossibility of any rivalry ever arising between them, seemed, from its very exaggeration, to tell a different tale.

"I find I have a number of recruits," said the new major, with a self-satisfied smile, "and shall, of course, find a world of occupation in making them acquainted with the colonel, and showing them something of the society of Brighton."

Mr. Randolph inquired if Lord de Mar was then at headquarters.

"Yes," was the reply; "his lordship and Lady Ida went thither from Killurie; and as your son, of course, will find it of consequence to secure the *entrée* at the colonel's house, I shall make it a point of taking him there immediately."

Mr. Randolph mentioned very quietly his son's previous acquaintance with Lord de Mar; a fact with which the gallant major was perfectly familiar, although it suited his self-consequence to forget it at the moment.

"Ah, true!" replied he; "I had forgotten that Lady Ida was Miss Randolph's guest upon the island, as well as Miss Forbes; and, on that account, your son will doubtless be entitled to claim the acquaintance of the family in his new quarters."

Katherine felt every inclination to laugh at this ill-bred impertinence, as she called to mind the Lady Ida's polite contempt for her right honourable partner, and the cordial intimacy with which she had treated his subaltern. But prudence controlled the half-indignant answer that rose to her lips, and the major departed in the full assurance that he had greatly lowered the importance of the Randolphs in their own estimation, and enhanced the value of his own notice and patronage.

The discovery of Lord de Mar's residence in Brighton did not by any means increase the pleasant impression entertained at the manse on the score of Julian's situation and prospects. Mr. Randolph inquired anxiously, as soon as their visitor was departed, if the information were new to Katherine, or if Julian had already made her acquainted with the circumstance.

"I knew nothing of it, papa," answered she, "and I am equally certain Julian himself was in ignorance. But why should you look uneasy? Even if Julian should be inclined to resume his homage to the Lady Ida, it can do no harm; there is no Uncle Fletcher at Brighton to be jealous of his devours, and surely he could not be in better society."

Mr. Randolph smiled, but Katherine remarked that the shade did not leave his brow immediately; and in the course of the day he desired that, when she wrote to Julian, she would not allude to the subject, as he was desirous that it should be first mentioned by himself.

Katherine was pained by the want of confidence which these words implied; and although she could not avoid making and keeping the promise required, yet she took care to inform Julian of the visit of Major Moira, and of his communicativeness regarding the society into which he intended to introduce the young officers. She did not believe that Julian intended to conceal the fact that Lady Ida would be near him; but it was possible that the consciousness of the peculiarity of his own situation, as well as the remembrance of sundry misfortunes that had already taken their rise from that source, might induce a sort of awkwardness in alluding to the subject which his father might misinterpret, and she was resolved, by every means in her power, to show him the impossibility of their remaining in ignorance of the matter.

In this case, also, her fears and her efforts were equally in vain; for a few days more brought a long letter from Julian, full of his new home, of his enthusiasm in all the details of his profession, and of his well-kept resolutions of study

and retirement. Moreover, it contained a long and free description of his first visit to the house of his noble colonel; of the cordiality with which he had been received by both father and daughter, and of the agreeable footing on which he already felt himself with both. He had already been honoured with a general invitation to share their morning rides, and his lordship had even gone so far as to express his hope that Julian would occasionally join the small evening circle at which Lady Ida was permitted to appear.

All this was matter of unmixed exultation to Katherine, and she felt half impatient of the grave surprise with which her father speculated upon the source of this extraordinary degree of favour shown to an obscure stranger, with so little claim as Julian possessed to the civilities of his colonel. The letter, however, could hardly fail of pleasing, and Mr. Randolph satisfied Katherine's heart by the approbation and tenderness of his reply.

All went well at the manse. The first excitement of Julian's departure died away, and Katherine gradually returned to her quiet and simple round of duties, and to her calm and placid contentment, which found its only interruption in the joy of a letter from Brighton, or an occasional visit to Killurie or Inverhaggernie.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I go to brave a world I hate,
And woo it o'er and o'er,
And tempt a wave and try a fate
Upon a stranger shore.—
Aileen.
Upon a stranger shore.—
John Doe."

MARION CHISHOLM had with infinite difficulty been persuaded by Katherine to spend at Killurie the period of a short absence of her brother from his home, and on the evening fixed upon for her appearance at the manse, Katherine bent her steps over the wild hill road, in hopes of meeting the little pony chaise in which her friend was accustomed to travel. It was a breezy and somewhat sad evening in September, with a clear, lucid atmosphere, and a yellow sunset. The wind was eddying among the rich masses of bronzed and golden leaves that clothed the mountain at its base, and although still soft and genial as the gales of summer, there was a tone of melancholy in its music. The deep, glorious purple of the loch, moreover, was broken by little foaming waves, that spoke of a stronger impulse than belongs to "the skyey influences" of the summer, even though it be a Highland one.

Katherine walked leisurely over the heights, her cheek freshened by the evening air, and her spirit elevated and soothed by the voices of the solitude. Thoughts that came the sweeter from their tint of sadness were busy at her heart, and it would have been hard to say whether the friend she was seeking, or the dear one far away, claimed the greater share in her musings. There was something in the gentle girl's devotion to her twin-brother which robbed the minor friendships of her life of half their dues; and many a time Katherine confessed to herself that even with a heart overflowing with kindness towards those who loved her, the engrossing claims of Julian were too constantly present with her.

Marion Chisholm was a dear playfellow of her very earliest years; and although, in the first stages of their acquaintance, Katherine had been the protégée, loaded with gifts and favours, caressed and welcomed by the little motherless lady of Inverhaggernie, and her grown-up brother, as the brightest and best-loved visitant of their home, yet, when after years had deprived Marion of her prosperity, and her father's death had left her and her noble brother with nothing but habits of luxury and unexpected embarrassments for a patrimony, Katherine became, in her turn, the active and indefatigable friend of the sick orphan; visiting her solitude with the warm cheerfulness of her benignant spirit, and sometimes winning her into her own sunny sphere by the unwearying efforts of her attention.

Marion was older than Katherine by a few months, but her weak health and extreme softness of character made her love more than that of a younger sister than their ages warranted. She was as peculiarly Katherine's charge as if the ties of blood united them; and she repaid her friend with that sweet and grateful dependance which the circumstances were likely to produce.

"I think neither of them could live without me," thought Katherine, with a throb of pure delight in her young heart, as she followed out her meditations on the two dearest objects of her solicitude; "and surely there is nothing so well worth living for as their happiness. I shall never love any human beings so well as Julian and Marion—I shall never have any other fate than that of their ministering spirit."

Whether there was a shade of meaning in these words, of which the speaker was scarcely conscious, or whether the circumstance was produced by mere surprise, unaided by association of any kind, is not on record; but, at the moment in which the sentence was half uttered, fair Katherine blushed the deepest colour of the rose, as a turn in the road brought her wellnigh in contact with Keith Chisholm of Inverhaggernie, who was advancing alone, and on foot, along the path.

"Keith alone! Where is Marion?" exclaimed she, in a tone which was the more earnest from her slight confusion. "Shall I be obliged to go for her myself at last?"

"No, no," answered he; "it was by my advice she deferred her drive till the morning; I fancied the evening a little chilly, and—"

"And so you preferred inflicting a long night of solitude upon her, to the chances of cold on such a soft autumn evening as this? I thought your code of health a much more correct one, Inverhaggernie."

"My dear Katherine," answered Chisholm, "I had weightier reasons; and if you will let me walk with you in the direction you were following, I will tell you them all. I expected you would walk this length to meet my sister, and for that reason I gave my horse to Donald, whom I encountered on the other side of the moor; so you see this intrusion of mine is a premeditated crime: and I kept Marion at home for no other reason than that I might have a whole hour of your company alone."

Katherine looked up in his face with an expression of pure surprise; but there was something in the grave smile with which he regarded her that made the blood rise again to her forehead. The confidence with which she had always been accustomed to regard him, however, was not to be dissipated by a moment of

confusion, and she replied with the unembarrassed and affectionate tone that was natural to her, "I am glad that I came, and that we have met."

She spoke gently and kindly to him for a little time upon topics of mutual interest—Marion's health, the term of his meditated absence, and the direction of his journey; for Katherine's unerring eye had discovered a shade that was heavier than usual upon his forehead, and she was anxious that he should feel himself on the confidential and familiar footing which always existed between them, before he entered upon the communication which she felt was approaching.

"Marion has never been at any one time so long as a fortnight at the manse," said she, " notwithstanding my many visitations to Inverhagernie. I trust she will not pine for you."

"I hope she may not, with all my heart," answered Chisholm, with an anxious tone, and a look of sudden uneasiness; "you do not know how much of my future comfort depends upon her visit to you."

"Ah!" said Katherine, with a quick apprehension of his meaning, "you wish to make it an experiment for a longer separation."

"Exactly, dearest Katherine," replied he: "but how far an absence of ten days may serve as a precedent for one of as many years, I cannot dare to decide."

"Years!" repeated she, in a tone of dismay; and her voice fell as she added, "Are you going to leave us for so long?"

Her face was turned downward, and she did not see the expression of intense interest with which he was watching the effect of his words upon her; but in a few minutes she laid her hand upon his arm, and said, in a tone of extreme gentleness,

"Do not be afraid, dear Keith—tell me all about it."

Katherine was not aware of the extent of meaning conveyed by her little sentence, and the gentleman seemed careful that she should not discover it; for he turned his face away till the soft smile which illuminated it had passed; and when he spoke again, it was to fulfil her bidding, in a tone unmarked by any feeling stronger than that of affectionate confidence.

"I believe you are sufficiently acquainted with my concerns to know that, up to the period of my father's death, I believed myself the heir of an unencumbered property, yielding a rental which was more than commensurate to the demands of such habits and tastes as I had imbibed; and that after that period I discovered my claims upon the inheritance to be of such a feeble tenure, that I must either sell the home of my fathers to the highest bidder, or forfeit such a sum as must be equivalent to my whole possessions. I think, however, that your information does not extend to the nature of this obligation, nor to the quarter in which it has been incurred. You will be surprised to learn, Katherine, that my impatient creditor is no less a personage than the colonel of your brother's regiment."

"Lord de Mar!" exclaimed she, in an accent of great surprise. "How you amaze me! In what way is it possible that your father should involve himself to such an extent with Lord de Mar? I never heard of the remotest connexion, or even acquaintanceship between them."

"They were brother officers in the —th," returned Chisholm, "so long ago as during the life

of my grandfather; but that circumstance affords no light to guide me through the mystery of this entanglement. During my dear father's life I have frequently heard him speak of gratitude due to young De Mar for his assistance in more than one juvenile dilemma; for, as you already know, dear Katherine, my father's late succession to the property, and his peculiarly open and liberal temperament, exposed him not unfrequently to difficulties even of a pecuniary nature; and I have heard him speak warmly of Lord de Mar's ready assistance in more than one case of the kind. Indeed, there were several documents among the papers bequeathed to me, which proved, to the honour both of debtor and creditor, the liberal friendship of the one, and the high-minded integrity of the other. But all these little services were of trifling importance, and were so openly boasted of by my father during his life, that the silence which he preserved upon a subject of such infinite importance as this seems only the more inexplicable to me. That one so simple and confiding in his frankness as my poor father should have preserved this heavy secret, and still retained his free and benevolent cheerfulness of spirit to the last, appears to me, I confess, a painful inconsistency."

"It seems scarcely possible," said Katherine, thoughtfully; "and yet a transaction of such importance could not surely have escaped his memory. What do the papers say which record this mysterious debt?"

"That is the circumstance of all others in the matter most unpleasant to me," answered Chisholm. "I can find no allusion to my father's bond to Lord de Mar, except in some trifling memoranda, in which he adverts generally to his obligation to his friend, as a debt which he enjoins me never to forget, but which, until my communication with his lordship, I had understood as applying altogether to the overcharged estimation in which a man of my poor father's temper was likely to hold the services rendered to him in his youth. There is no record in existence which can inform me of the amount of my own liability, excepting that duplicate of my father's bond which Lord de Mar's agent handed to me six months ago."

Katherine walked on in silence for several minutes, and then she asked, with an absent tone of voice, and as if she were scarcely aware of the connexion of her question with the subject,

"Is Lord de Mar a man of honour, Keith?"

Keith shook his head and smiled. "I know very little of *him*," answered he; "but General Forbes is a man of honour, and his is one of the signatures affixed to the bond."

She looked up hastily, and a flush of painful surprise rose to her cheek. "It is quite irretrievable, dearest Katherine," pursued Chisholm, gravely; "the best counsel which Britain can give assure me that the deed is without a flaw. I am a ruined man, as far as one can be called ruined who has the vigour of manhood and the treasure of an unblemished reputation to boast; and with these, and the blessing of Heaven, I trust I shall one day redeem my home from the stranger, though at a price which—which—it will be hard to pay."

And he passed his hand over his forehead as if to gain a reassurance of his self-command.

Katherine clasped her hands over the arm she was leaning on, and looked up to him with tears in her eyes.

"I have told you my griefs, I must now tell you my remedy," said he, after a pause, and with an effort at cheerfulness. "I must relinquish this dear home of mine for one great portion of my life, if I desire that the latter end be spent within its walls. My mother's friend, General Stuart, has interest to procure me an official appointment in the West Indies, the revenues of which are more than sufficient to redeem Inverhaggernie in ten years; but—"

He looked earnestly down upon her face. The light of her eyes seemed quenched, and her cheek was colourless.

"I know—I know," said she, in a low, sad voice, full of pity and kindness; "you are unhappy in the thought of leaving Marion. Give her to me, dearest Keith," and the light came again to her countenance. "Let my home be hers—commit her happiness to us, and I, and those whom I love best, will make that happiness our constant study."

There was a film on his own eyes as he thanked and blessed her, but he forgot to accept her proposal, and a pause of deep feeling on both sides succeeded. At last he stopped from his walk, and said, in a tone rendered musical by the depth of feeling which it conveyed,

"There are others, dear Katherine, whom it will be deep suffering to leave behind; there are those whom it is the heaviest grief of all to relinquish; those who have been the dearest in youth and in manhood, and to possess whom, when youth shall be past, might well cheer a pilgrimage more toilsome than is before me."

Katherine turned her head aside and breathed painfully.

"Do not fear, dearest Katherine," continued Keith—and his voice gathered firmness even as it became more sad—"I am not going to express any of the hopes that were six months ago so dear to me. The indulgence of them is now no longer justifiable, and I will not pain you with details of the suffering it has cost me to subdue them. I am forced now, God help me! to thank Heaven that they have never been expressed before, and to rejoice that that is still unwon which would have been the dearest blessing in life."

Katherine did not speak, but the glance which he stole of her face revealed it to him bathed in tears.

"Sweet Katherine, forgive me," said he, in a tone of anxiety and self-reproach; "I did not mean to distress you thus. I am ashamed of the self-indulgence that draws thus upon your sympathy. I would have left you with these words unspoken, dearest Katherine, had it not been a task wellnigh beyond my efforts to speak the farewell, which I feel to be a last one, in any character save one."

"Why do you speak so?" said Katherine, in a tone of distress. "Why do you call it a last farewell? Surely, though this long absence be inevitable, it will not last forever, and when it is ended, shall we not meet again, and be to each other all that—that we have been before?"

"My dearest Katherine, my gentlest, kindest friend," answered he, in a voice which shook with its own tenderness, "I thank you even for this; I am conscious, nevertheless, that it implies more than I can appropriate. Our farewell is indeed everlasting. I am neither blind nor selfish enough to imagine that we shall meet again in the same relation as we hold at present. Since you can never be more to me, it must be

my study to render myself less to you, for Heaven has decreed that I can be your friend no longer. Dearest Katherine, forgive me! I could almost despise myself for the weakness of this confession; but you do not know how it wrung me to leave you with my affection untold. I seek for nothing in return. I know that this declaration is too unexpected to elicit anything that would make me happy, even were the circumstances under which it is made less hopeless. I seek for nothing, dear Katherine, but the indulgence of telling the object of my boyish love, that hers is the first image that ever warmed my heart, and the last that will depart from it. I have loved you, Katherine, from the first moment which taught me to distinguish one feeling from another; I will love you till such knowledge shall have passed away; and yet I leave you without daring to wish that my image may linger with you for an hour. I have now no object to live for but to redeem my father's name from censure, and to provide, a home, for my desolate Marion."

"Do not say so, dearest Keith," said Katherine, in an earnest voice, and looking up to him with an expression from which everything was banished but the tenderness of her pity; "rather say that your incentive is strong enough to bring you back to us unchanged, that it will sustain you throughout all the years of absence, and lead you back to live and die among those who love you best."

"Who will they be then, dear Katherine?" said he, mournfully.

"Who will they be?" repeated she, warmly: "do you think we are likely to forget you—do you think we are likely to love others better?"

She discovered the force of her words immediately, and the innocent shame rose to her forehead in a flush of crimson; but she turned away only for a moment, and when she looked up again, a smile of generous confidence was on her face.

"God bless you! God bless you, my own dear Katherine!" said Keith, in a low voice, and the tears glittering on his own eyelash. He turned towards her again and again, as if the words were struggling for utterance in his breast; but none were audible; and as the feelings within overmastered him, he stopped for an instant, pressed both her hands upon his breast, and, turning abruptly round an angle of the footpath, disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

"If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid
Indeed within the centre."—SHAKESPEARE.

Anon a fortnight subsequent to the departure of Inverhaggernie on his journey to England, it chanced that the clew that guides us through the labyrinth of this history bowled suddenly into the breakfast-room of Killurie Castle, a spacious and very interesting apartment in the south front of the edifice, the windows of which, although nearly parallel to the ledge of the rock which formed its basement, commanded a perfect sweep of the glorious scenery of the strath.

We have no time at present, however, to linger over the majesty of crag or mountain, or the delicate loveliness of the morning mist, as it rose from the bosom of the loch into the clear au-

umnal atmosphere, making the tall, deep-set windows a point of such attraction as none less powerfully interested by other matters could in any case have overlooked. Our business is more immediately with the interior of the chamber, and the living objects of interest which it contained.

At a convenient distance from the fire stood the breakfast-table, with all its appendages of elegance and comfort, and its tall silver vase, that sent up a column of steam in the direction of the carved oaken roof, more cheerful, if less poetic, than the vapours visible from without. At one end Miss Forbes was presiding; and at the other, with his chair drawn snugly in towards the fire, sat the general, his cup of tea untasted, and his muffin turning cold beside him.

The empty post-bag was lying near, and its contents were scattered over the table. They seemed this morning to be of engrossing interest; for the lady was eating her breakfast slowly and carelessly, between the intervals of perusing a long letter, while the old gentleman seemed to have forgotten his in the absorbing importance of a newspaper.

The lady's occupation was first ended, and as she folded up her letter and turned her attention towards the general, she discovered that he had ceased reading, and was pondering some part of the contents of the newspaper with a degree of earnestness which it did not always command.

"Any news?" asked Miss Forbes, at last. "I have had no time for politics this morning. Nothing 'rotten in the state of Denmark,' I hope, that you look so gravely?"

"Hester," said the old gentleman, looking as though he had not heard her, "did you ever hear of any embarrassments or encumbrances on the estate of Inverhaggernie?"

"Inverhaggernie!" repeated the lady, in a tone of surprise; "no; on the contrary, I have frequently heard it remarked by those who ought to know, that the son's good sense has so fairly counterbalanced the old man's fanciful extravagance, as to preserve the property wonderfully free for a Highland lairdship."

"And have you not always heard, too," resumed her father, "that young Chisholm was much attached to the place, and meant to reside there with his sick sister?"

"Yes—that is the Randolph's account of them—or *was*, at least, when we last spoke on the subject. Indeed, I have heard Chisholm myself declare that no consideration short of Marion's health would induce him to leave home for a residence of any duration."

"Ah! his sister's health," said the general, as a new light broke upon him; "that might take him abroad for a while, but could not make him wish to sell his property."

"Sell it!" exclaimed Miss Forbes; "sell an estate that has been in his family I don't know how many centuries! that is totally out of the question. I shall never seek such a proof of the degeneracy of the age in one whose character I admire so much as Chisholm's. Besides, I have particular feminine reasons for believing the thing to be impossible. The man's in love; the last act of a man in love would be to sell his house, I imagine."

"That depends on the decree of his fate, I suspect," replied the general; "but for sale it is, if we may believe a newspaper advertisement."

With an exclamation of surprise, Miss Forbes stretched out her hand for the newspaper, and, despite her incredulity, there was the paragraph, sure enough; the estate of Inverhaggernie for sale, with its mansion-house and appendages, all characteristically set forth with the laudatory phrase usual in such traffic.

Miss Forbes would not believe her eyes—it was nonsense—it was a mistake—it was a trick—it was an expedient of Keith to discover the real value of his beautiful lands; and the conclusion, "In consequence of the owner's intention of accepting a government situation in the West India Islands, and his desire, in consequence of the uncertain period of his absence, to relieve himself from all encumbrances."

"Keith Chisholm accept a post from government among the West India Islands!" exclaimed Miss Forbes. "My dear father, the whole affair is a delusion—unless, indeed, my silly Katherine has refused him, and then the young man has my excuse for what extravagance he pleases. I trust this is all nonsense, sir. Do you know it makes me almost uneasy?"

"It makes me more anxious than I dare confess or assign a reason for," said the general, with a look of perplexity, and even of pain, upon his countenance. "I must learn the truth of this matter before I sleep. What's that you were saying about Katherine? Are the Randolphs likely to be well acquainted with Chisholm's concerns?"

"Most likely," returned Miss Forbes; "indeed, I can make you certain of information in that quarter to any extent. But what makes you so keenly interested in this matter, my dear sir? I had fancied my friendship for Keith of a much deeper tint than yours, and yet even mine is eclipsed. Is there anything that makes the estate an object of peculiar interest to you?"

"Why—yes," answered the general, with some hesitation; "there was some youthful folly of the old laird, in which I was myself in a slight degree implicated, and which has ever since rendered the wellbeing of Inverhaggernie and its possessors a matter of painful solicitude to me; I cannot tell why, for I am sure I ought to be convinced that everything is as it ought to be, and yet"—the general seemed speaking almost to himself—"I am never quite at ease in the society of De Mar—I never feel, as it were, *willing to esteem him*."

A few straightforward questions on the part of the lady put her quickly in possession of all the circumstances of the case, and the anxiety of the general was fairly overbalanced by her own kind-hearted alarm. The result was a walk to the manse, which Miss Forbes requested her father to perform alone, and a long consultation with Mr. Randolph, during which the old gentleman learned enough to confirm his worst apprehensions, and to arouse all the energies of his benevolence in the cause of the Chisholms.

That no channel of information might be overlooked, the general begged a convoy through the fields from his fair friend Miss Katherine; and she left her seat beside Marion's easy-chair to attend him. Certainly there were more blushes called up during the walk in question than usually arise out of a *lise à tête* where a gentleman of seventy-two is the cavalier; for the good general questioned and cross-questioned poor Katherine upon the tastes, and habits, and prospects of her friend Keith with a degree of curiosity which she had never remarked before, and

which she attributed, with a flutter at her heart, to his paternal interest in herself.

"I shall be sorry to lose so good a neighbour as Inverhaggernie—shall not you?" asked the old gentleman, with a smile.

"Ah, yes," replied Katherine, simply; "it will be very sad when they are both away."

"Is he fond of the idea of going abroad?" inquired the general.

"No—oh, no, no," returned she; "it will almost break his heart to leave Inverhaggernie."

"What, then, is it your cruelty, my pretty Katherine, that is driving him away?"

Katherine blushed very much, but she rallied all her courage to reply.

"No, general—I am as anxious that he should remain as he is himself."

"That's my good child, to speak the truth bravely," answered the old gentleman; "I hope you were equally ingenuous to him?"

"I did not need, sir," said Katherine; "he knows that we shall all part with him as with a brother and a son."

"Do you expect he will return to this country?" asked the general, after a pause.

"Return!" repeated she, opening her eyes, and colouring with surprise; "oh dear, I hope he will. Return! surely he is not leaving Inverhaggernie forever. Perhaps you think the climate—"

Poor Katherine did not finish this terrible sentence, but she hung earnestly upon the general's reply to it.

"Nay, nay, nay," answered he, smiling, "I have no apprehension of the climate; I only thought it possible that he might succeed in persuading you to go with him."

The general perceived that Katherine's information did not extend to the sale of the Inverhaggernie property, and he was too good-natured to inflict a pang that could be spared by enlightening her.

"It is all true, Hester," said the general to his daughter, in a voice of some perturbation, when they met at dinner; "it is exactly as I feared. De Mar is a scoundrel; and, unless my power over him be greatly superior to what I account it, that poor youth is fairly in his meshes."

Miss Forbes asked eagerly what intelligence he had gained at the manse.

"Mr. Randolph told me all that was necessary to make my assurance doubly sure," replied he. "Chisholm finds himself charged with a debt to Lord de Mar, of which, in his father's lifetime, he knew nothing; and he is left with no alternative but to sell his home or abandon it. This West Indian project was the young man's expedient to redeem the estate, it seems, by his own personal exertions. Its immediate sale was as great a surprise to Mr. Randolph as to ourselves. God bless me!" added the good general, in a tone of infinite chagrin, "I fear there is more evil in all this than I can remedy; and yet we shall try for it. I must start for Brighton to-morrow."

"It is a long journey for you, my dear sir," said Miss Forbes, "and a short notice, considering you have been so long unaccustomed to a sudden route. Cannot you wait at least till next week, and write, meanwhile, to Lord de Mar?"

The old gentleman shook his head.

"This is no time for useless delays. I shall not waste one unnecessary moment until I have effected my purpose or it is defeated. To say

the truth, Hester, this matter has unhinged me in many ways. The light in which it has placed De Mar is most distressing to me, on various accounts; and, had it broken upon me a little earlier, I should have been more wary how I placed Julian Randolph under his auspices. I cannot forget that Julian owes his present situation entirely to my influence, and that I am, in some sort, answerable for its eligibility. In short, my dear Hester, I shall be in a fidget until I have warned the boy what sort of ground he must occupy with his superior officer. I know the headlong nature of his impulses well enough, and you have taught me to consider them peculiarly warm in this instance, on account of that foolish penchant of his for the Lady Ida. No combination of circumstances could be more likely to throw Julian into the power of a designing man than the present; and, till he is put in possession of them, I shall not consider him safe, nor myself free from censure."

"At present, Julian can scarcely be considered of sufficient importance to attract the evil eye," said Miss Forbes; "his expectations cannot be generally known as yet."

"They may, and they may not," returned the general, emphatically; "but he shall be warned."

General Forbes was too old a campaigner to experience much inconvenience from his hasty journey, and next morning, before the sun had shown his bald red head above Ben Uri, he was far on his road to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XV.

"You have been wretched, yet
The silver shower whose reckless burden weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root."

WORDSWORTH.

KATHERINE found Marion Chisholm but a cheerless inmate. The united pressure of grief and sickness upon a spirit naturally meek and uncomplaining, had wellnigh bowed it to the dust; and Katherine's simple and kindly efforts to instil a portion of her own cheerfulness into the breast of the sufferer were baffled continually, less by the obstinate dejection of sorrow than by the total absence of that youthful elasticity of spirit which seems necessary to surmount it. And yet human gentleness could not exceed the patient, unobtrusive quiet which distinguished her. She seemed contented to go mourning through life, or rather, like the withered sea-flower, to lie shrunken and scentless upon the shore, till that wave came which was to bear her into the ocean of eternity. There was no word of bitterness ever escaped her lips—no wistful longing after that which fate had torn from her—and no querulous impatience of what the future might bring forth. Even the feeling of anticipation, peculiar to, and almost inseparable from youth—the ever-springing hope that grazes so eagerly around, seeking to trace each feature of our fate as the rising sun of life reveals it—even this seemed with her to have been quenched. The present and the future were alike a blank; the past, a lovely garden, whose flowers had shed their leaves.

There is something heart-wringing in a picture of joyless youth. The stormiest bursts of

grief seem natural to youth's sun-laden atmosphere ; but a premature twilight of the soul chills us with the same unnatural influence which seems to bind the face of nature with a spell during the sad, brief moments of the sun's eclipse.

So felt Katherine when her mind became overshadowed by its hopeless sympathy for her friend. Her own active and happy spirit found in general so little to impede the course of its ministrations, and the contagion of her cheerfulness was so seldom resisted by those whom she felt desirous to enliven, that Marion's calm and unimpassible melancholy was to her a new and strange experience. It used to bring the tears to her own eyes when a gay appeal, or a sportive and affectionate remonstrance, elicited only the calm, sad smile, which, in its sweetness, and the gratitude expressed by it, breathed the very spirit of desolation. If Katherine sang the softest melodies of her country—strains which spoke but to the purest and highest feelings in the minds of both, and which seldom failed to soothe every pulse in the heart of the singer to such peace as cometh only to the innocent and the happy—when she turned towards Marion, in the hope of tracing that blessed and elevating calm on the face also of the listener, her heart would ache to find only slow and silent tears following each other over a cheek which their course had whitened ; or if a favourite volume were opened to fill up the intervals of conversation, Katherine found that her own most prized treasure—the lays of that heaven-born mind, whose glorious flight her own joyed and exulted, even at the lowliest distance, but to watch, were of a tone too lofty and serene for the drooping soul of Marion to enjoy ; and the sublime philosophy, the pure and tranquil majesty of Wordsworth, were often laid aside for the melancholy numbers of Cowper, or the morbid gloom of Young.

Even when the unusual softness of an autumnal night wiled the group to the little trellised porch, and, under the evening star, Mr. Randolph would unlock the treasures of his own beautiful taste and active fancy to adorn some subject of holy and mysterious interest, it was ever the worthlessness of men—the vague and joyless nature of human life—the folly of loving even the beautiful objects which God made for us with too warm and earnest an affection, and the morbid lingering over our own undeservings, which marked poor Marion's participation in the theme ; not, as in the case of Katherine, the warm, youthful enthusiasm of gratitude to God for the glory of his works, and joy that the happiness of admiring was free to all men ; not the exultation of a pure young faith, which in lowliness of spirit commits its treasure to the keeping of Him who gave it, and cumbereth not itself with the result ; not the fair spirit of universal love, whose clear fountain the rude hand of adversity has never stirred, and which pours its irrigating waters over its own sweet plain ; not the free, buoyant fancy, which finds

"Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Even when, in the soft, tremulous glory of the starlight, each turned her gaze far up into the dome of night, and sent the imagination forth to bring back tidings of what lay beyond, it was a

rest from care that poor Marion delighted to picture—a shelter from every blast that comes to blight us here—home of quiet safety, where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest ;" while Katherine's dream was a region of active and unslumbering benevolence—a sphere where to work God's glorious will shall be our occupation, and to bear his messages of love, from orb to orb of his mighty universe, our daily work—where to do good, unfettered by the burden of the flesh, shall be our privilege, and to dwell forever with those whom we love in the radiant presence of Jehovah, our reward.

And yet the dissimilarity of taste and feeling which separated Katherine from her less favoured friend tended rather to deepen and augment the affection that bound them to each other. With Katherine, the despondent and mournful tendency of Marion's mind gave an additional shade of tenderness to the sympathy with which she regarded her, and a freer scope for the exercise of her kindness in the endeavour to overcome it ; while Marion found, as the desponding ever do, almost unconsciously, a support in the buoyant spirit of her friend, to which she leaned even when she seemed most opposed to its working.

Katherine delighted in prognosticating, with her tone of playful raillery, that the time would come when returning health and happiness would rob Marion of her stoical contempt of life and its affairs, and render her as active and as gay a mountaineer as she was herself ; and Marion loved the prophecy, even while she held up her wasted hand, and shook her head in mockery of it.

"Wrap my warmest plaid about you, and come with me to the garden," said Katherine, in her most cheering accents ; "I have excused your walk for two days on account of the cold, but now it is so bright and sunny that you have no reasonable excuse to offer, unless you tell me that you prefer the neighbourhood of the fire to my society. Come, come, you have not seen the white dahlias since they bloomed ; you cannot think how lovely they are looking. Papa and I have a dispute about the beauty of the single and the double. Come and look at them, or you will have no interest in the argument."

"Dahlias ! dear Katherine ; it is surely no weather for gardening," said the invalid, with a slight shiver ; "it looks as keen and frosty as December."

And she looked out of the window, and shrank like a fallen rose-leaf.

"Fy, Marion, for shame," replied her friend, laughing at the look of discomfort ; "it is more like a day in July than anything else. No wonder Donald calls you a tender flower, since this gentle breeze can make you shiver even to look at. Come, come, dear Marion, make an effort to reward my patient endurance of a solitary walk yesterday. I promise you, that if the air feels chilly when we have got as far as the garden, I will walk straight back again without another remonstrance ; but do make the attempt."

Marion would most gladly have been left to her work and her solitude ; but, having nothing to reply to Katherine's appeal, she suffered herself to be wrapped in plaids and boas according

to the judgment of her friend, and, amid much gayety and good-humoured ridicule on the part of one, and a few shudders and self-condolences from the other, they departed.

The day was, as Katherine represented, warm and genial as the gales of summer, and her own spirit stirred joyously under its influence; but to Marion, after two days' confinement, the mere change of atmosphere was a trial, and before they had reached the garden-gate she was reminding her of her promise to return.

"Nay, nay, you must see the dahlias now, when you are this length," said Katherine, with her kind-hearted cunning. "Why, you are more afraid of sunshine than the owl in the fairy tale. Don't you know, you simple thing, that the sun is much warmer than the sea-coal fire, if you will only allow time for his rays to reach you? Now yonder are the dahlias; this on the outer border is the single one, my favourite, with your leave—don't you think it might be mistaken for the 'star of Jove so beautiful and large,' dimmed, and paled, and shorn of his beams in the atmosphere of this world? And that farther away, with its rich globe of white petals, is the double, irreverently designated by florists the 'mountain of snow.' Now you need not be making up your mind in a hurry as to their relative perfections; take time to consider the subject seriously, while I go and bring you something fragrant."

She moved to and fro among her favourites with the air and motion of one who finds extreme gratification in the trifling attentions which they demand—now twitching away a withered leaf, now arranging the stake which supported a flower, now loosening or tightening the band which confined them, and now plucking up an intruding weed which disfigured their roots.

"There!" said she, at last, cutting a fine crimson carnation for her friend, who stood gazing at her from the walk with the air of one who seeks in vain to discover the source of another's enjoyment; "there! is not that a magnificent thing for the garden of a Highland manse? Dearest Marion, are they not beautiful? are not the flowers of autumn glorious?"

"Yes, dearest, but the flowers of spring are sweeter, are they not?" answered the invalid, with the usual melody of sadness in her voice.

"No, no, no!" replied Katherine, "the flowers of spring are pale, feeble, scentless things: beautiful only from their fragility, and from their promise of brighter things in store."

"Ay, but the promise is sometimes broken, and then where are the flowers of autumn, Katherine!" said the bereaved orphan, in a tone which spoke more of the type of her meaning than of its reality.

"No, no," replied Katherine, warmly; "Nature never yet betrayed the heart that loved her; she breaks no promises, dear Marion, and the flowers of our mental soil are not less faithful to their augury. The thunder-storms of summer only clear the air for the growth of these noble blossoms, as the trials of our youth purify the atmosphere that blesses our maturity."

Marion smiled mournfully. "You have no experience to overcloud your fancy, dearest Katherine. I pray God that it may never lose its brightness."

"Nay," answered Katherine, with a smile, "I

will not have you believe that I look at truth through a painted glass; I only reject the dull medium which you are ready to employ, and try to find contentment in the reality. I believe, dearest Marion, that even your heavy trials could not have robbed me of the desire to be happy."

Marion sighed heavily. "I believe you, dearest," said she, in a tone of submission. "Heaven has gifted you with a natural buoyancy which no influence can thoroughly depress. Be thankful for it, Katherine; no boon of nature is half so precious."

"Well," returned Katherine, "I confess that the blessing of health is one great and indispensable ingredient of happiness. But still, dear Marion, they are both more easily obtained than people fancy."

Marion smiled incredulously.

"Nay," persisted Katherine, "if you look so skeptical, I shall think myself bound to show you how many recipes may prove successful. For instance, there is such a thing as being happy by proxy; you cannot think how easy it is to view life pleasantly through another person's eyes!"

"Is it?" returned Marion; "then why cannot I make use of yours?"

"Because, dearest, you must earn the privilege of using them. You must know how to put on your spectacles before you will find them of any service," answered Katherine, earnestly, while her cheeks glowed and her eyes glistened with the affectionate interest she took in the subject.

Marion smiled at her eagerness. "I wish I knew the secret which preserves your freshness of spirit, dearest Katherine," said she, after a pause.

"And I wish nothing more than to be permitted to expose that secret to you," replied Katherine. "Let me begin to-day, dear Marion. See, you are already warmed by this bright sun. Let it tempt you still a little farther, and come with me the whole length of my walk. Be persuaded to examine the routine of my day's employment, and you will soon find the source of that cheerfulness which surprises you. It is but a small circle of homely every-day duties, dear Marion, but still it is sufficient to engage my heart, and save it from the fatal habit of brooding on its own cares."

The sunshine was a powerful argument in Katherine's favour, and, after a moment's hesitation, Marion agreed to walk with her to the place of her destination, a little wild hamlet called Clach-na-hard, which, situated in a nook of the mountains of Glenurie, was so lonely in its tiny strath, that, despite the immediate proximity of its owner, the Lord of Inverawe, it looked as if it might escape the observation of all who were not bent on discovering it.

Katherine tapped on the window of the dairy as she passed, and a light basket, well packed, was handed out to her, which, with a laugh to Marion, she hung carefully over one arm, and offered the other for her friend's support.

A few minutes' walk brought them to the edge of the burn, which Katherine crossed, by means of a row of stepping-stones, with the agility of a fawn, but which it cost Marion a world of shrinking, and protesting, and laughing raillery to encounter.

Clach-na-hard, though concealed by the inter-

vening slope of the hill from the view of all who stood on the farthest margin of the stream, was nevertheless distant by scarcely half a mile from the manse garden. It was a picturesque, but most wild and primitive scene. The handful of houses were of the rudest order of Highland shealings, and the small glen in which they stood of the loneliest description of mountain solitudes. It seemed to be a distinct community in itself, for which poverty had secured a state of independence; inasmuch as though the misshapen huts had each its stand of turf beside the door, and its square yard of potato-ground behind, the arrangement appeared to have been brought about rather by the individual exertions of the inhabitants than through any gift of a superior power or connivance of a landlord.

Marion exclaimed aloud as she beheld the extreme poverty and desolation of the little village, and wondered the lord of the manor could be so neglectful of his people's welfare.

"Clach-na-hard is too far away from the 'house' to be considered within the reach of his lordship," answered Katherine; "and there are no ladies in the family to search it out. This is *my* village, properly speaking, and I pray you not to condemn it from the mere character of its exterior. Wait till we have paid our visits."

And she turned into the door of the nearest cottage as she spoke.

Those who have visited the interior of a Highland shealing of the class I am endeavouring to describe, need not to be told that delicacy and fastidiousness of nerve or sense are alike out of place if carried into such companionship. A damp clay floor, an atmosphere of peat smoke, and a roof of naked rafters, that gleam with the japanning of a generation's fires, are the least uncomfortable experiences in such a visit, unless, indeed, where some controlling influence, like that of Katherine, shall have been before you, and then the catalogue is reduced to the sum at which I leave it.

The scene that presented itself to Marion was one to which her weak health and delicate breeding had both rendered her a stranger, despite the frequency of its occurrence, on even the best-regulated domain of a Highland gentleman. A dim, blue, palpable obscurity rendered her very footing insecure when she first entered, and Marion clung to her companion with a blind reliance on her guidance, which it needed many minutes' experience of the smoky atmosphere to remove. At last, however, her eyes became habituated to the darkness, and her lungs to the smoke, and she could perceive that a certain air of neatness was discernible even in this murky den, for the larger half of a young birch-tree was burning cheerily on the hearth, and a pot, on its primitive *cleek* of woodwork, was boiling above it.

A rude frame beside the pane of glass that did duty as a window supported a row of quaichs and bickers scrubbed to the utmost degree of purity, as well as a few pewter articles of kitchen furniture, equally trustworthy on the score of cleanliness.

At one end of the apartment a large press-bed constituted the family dormitory, and near it stood the churn, an article of such primitive construction that a Lowlander would have been puzzled to determine the nature of its uses. The floor, with its many inequalities, was well swept,

and the window, albeit of scant proportion, was free from cobwebs; and on the highest shelf in the immediate neighbourhood there were two or three decent-looking books, that seemed as if they were well read, and yet well cared for.

The only occupant of the cabin was a boy of ten or twelve years old, whose attention seemed divided between the pot that was hanging above the fire and a small well-thumbed volume, in which Marion by-and-by discovered that he was industriously spelling the alphabet. He was a sickly, dark-skinned child, with a look of surprising intelligence in his face, and a pair of bright black eyes, which flashed to and fro with an acuteness of expression that was almost electric. It was their extreme brilliancy, indeed, which first drew from Marion a remark, after the friends had fairly made good their entrance, and stood to watch him, themselves unnoticed, beside the fire.

"He is deaf and dumb," said Katherine, and she laid her hand playfully over the page that occupied him. The boy lifted his eyes; and, as they rested on his visitors, there was a look of delight sparkled up in them that made Marion wellnigh exclaim at their vivid intelligence. The next moment he had flung down his book, made a low bow two or three times repeated, and then, colouring all over, he stood the picture of awkwardness and welcome.

Katherine took off her gloves and placed them in her basket, and then, with the utmost dexterity, ran a few sentences glibly over her fingers in the ingenious and invaluable language of signs, wherein it has become possible to communicate with the dumb.

The boy replied to her with a rapidity which outdid her own, and Marion stood watching them with the keenest interest.

"He says his mother and sisters are shearing at Killurie, and he has been left at home to watch the dinner," said Katherine, interrupting her mute colloquy for a moment to interpret; "and that he has been rehearsing the lesson I gave him on Sunday, till he is almost perfect in it."

She resumed her conversation with the boy for a few moments, after which he turned from them towards the window, opened the single pane by a hinge, and, bringing in a couple of flower-pots which were resting on the outside, displayed, with great exultation, to Katherine and her companion, a full-blown monthly rose, and a fragrant and verdant verbena.

"Poor thing!" said Marion, in a voice of great interest, "how happy he seems!"

"He is, without exception, the happiest and most intelligent boy in the strath," answered Katherine. "Ivan has been my protégé from his very cradle, and when he was only six years old, I made interest with General Forbes to have him sent to that admirable institution where this language of signs is taught. He was to have remained there till his education was complete; but he grew sick and delicate, poor boy! with the air of the great town, and we were forced to bring him home again, or his mother would have broken her heart; for, as usual, the afflicted one in the family is the dearest to her. But Ivan is so very acute, and his knowledge of this curious language makes it so easy to communicate with him, that I was bold

enough to undertake his instruction in reading myself, and we are succeeding to admiration."

The boy had disappeared during this conversation, and he now returned with something wrapped very neatly in a piece of smoky newspaper, which he presented, with a bow and a look of palpable delight, to his young preceptor. Katherine unfolded the packet with the most gratifying appearance of interest, and revealed a set of knitting-pins made of oak, and very nicely turned to the requisite smoothness, for which she appeared so grateful, and patted the poor little donor on the shoulder with so much kindness, that his black eyes seemed as if they emitted rays.

"He has a genius for mechanics, too," said she, in explanation, "and papa gave him a little turning-lathe, of which these, it seems, are the first-fruits."

Marion examined them with many looks and signs of approval, and when, in answer to some sentence of Katherine's, he blushed, and bowed, and even laughed with delight, she discovered that her friend had gladdened his heart by requesting another set of needles as a gift to the lady who accompanied her.

Marion was completely interested by the poor little dumb boy, and the smoke and the darkness were forgotten in the eagerness with which she watched him.

"Yes, dearest Katherine," said she, when they had left the cottage, "this is one recipe for happiness. The consciousness of restoring that little sufferer to the fellowship of his species would be a drop to sweeten the bitterest cup. Now I understand your theory of happiness by proxy. That poor child is as contented with his flowers, and his knitting-pins, and his spelling-book, as the proudest among us with all our undeserved enjoyments. His happiness emanates from you, dear Katherine; no wonder that it should be reflected back again."

Katherine laughed in the joy of her innocent and kind heart, and prepared to lift the latch of a second cottage door.

"Do not expect to find anything so interesting as Ivan in every house," said she; "this is one of a very different stamp, though no less a favourite, and almost as much a charge."

They entered. The cottage was in all respects similar to the last, except in the number of its occupants; but at a small, clean-looking table at the far end of the apartment, a stout labourer was swallowing his dinner—a mess of cold *sowens*; and beside the fire a good-looking young woman was nursing a pair of babies, whose respective ages could not very far have exceeded eight days. A scanty wardrobe seemed to have been shared between them, and its deficiencies were supplied by the end of an old plaid, in which the careful mother had wrapped them both, with much pride and fondness.

The man rose with natural good breeding and politeness as they entered, and the mother deposited the little twins upon the bed until the duties of hospitality should be fulfilled.

"Oh Peggy, for shame, for shame!" said Katherine, with a kind voice, to her hostess. "Did not I tell you that you were not to be out of bed for a week yet? and did not I desire Duncan to come to the manse for his dinner every day till you should be able to dress it for

him? We will find you driven to take refuge there at last, though you are so shy of asking our assistance now."

The young woman coloured and courtesied, and ejaculated something in her imperfect English about having given too much trouble already, at the same time that she followed Katherine with looks of absolute affection, as she moved towards the bed to examine the babies.

"There, Marion, did you ever see two such delicate flowers? they are positively the prettiest babies I ever beheld: far too pretty and fair to be wrapped in an old piece of tartan—so here are the two little suits for them. They have been too long coming, Peggy, but that was the fault of your own modesty, that would not tell me your wants a little sooner. There—there—" and she half emptied her little basket. "The cook sent you this nice strong jelly for your dinner, and mamma hopes you will take a glass of wine from this bottle every day for a fortnight, till you are strong again, and at the end of it you are to bring the babies down to the manse to be christened. Well, how are things prospering with you, Duncan? Plenty of work now?"

"Yes, madam," answered the Highlander, "many thanks to you an' your papa, a' things are prosperous noo. The general's new approach keeps us a' thrang, an' the good wages 'll no be wanting. I'm to get mine in potatoes the first week, an' after that I shall be looking for siller for the cow ye were speaking of."

A few words of interest and encouragement concluded the visit, and again Katherine looked in her friend's face with her smile of appeal.

"Well, what do you think of my proxy here?" asked she, playfully.

"Why, I confess, the happiness of yonder couple is somewhat of a paradox," returned Marion, with a smile; "I have never witnessed such an extreme of poverty as that, dearest Katherine."

"A few months ago," answered Katherine, "that poor couple came to the manse, begging shelter for the night in our barn. It was immediately after the severe winter, when the poor people were almost starved to death; and this man and woman had a little child with them, which was dying from absolute hunger. I am a bit of physiognomist, you know; so I took a liking to the young wife, and begged papa's leave to let them remain at the manse, and share in the spring labour of the farm. But their child died, and after that the mother would not be persuaded to leave the country; so I rode over one fine day, and begged my lord's permission to establish them in Clach-na-hard. They are beginning to thrive in the world now, and by-and-by, when Peggy has her cow, I flatter myself she will grow quite rich."

Again Marion's heart swelled with affectionate admiration of her friend's active and cheerful humanity, and again she smiled at the construction put upon what she looked at in the light only of a privilege.

"These are my pets," said Katherine, and she moved towards the third cottage; "do not expect to have your interest and your sympathies equally excited by all whom I introduce to you. Here, for instance, is a case which puts

my patience sorely to the test, and of which, if the truth must be spoken, I am very nearly tired.

The next moment they stood within a house which borrowed something like an air of superiority over the other shealings of the glen, from the whitewashing of the window-sill and the hearthstone, and the circumstance of an old rug being stretched by the bedside. Moreover, a cheerful fire of peats burned upon the hearth, and a large black cat was coiled up beside it, with an air of snugness which was quite enlivening.

In a three-cornered arm-chair on one side of the chimney, there was an old woman knitting busily, whose person was a sort of living illustration of three separate peculiarities: a wonderful erectness of carriage, a scrupulous cleanliness of person, and an expression of face which, without being exclusively indicative of sickness, discontent, or mental affliction, was cross enough to have sat for the combination of all three.

"Well, Elspet," said Katherine, in a cheerful tone, "how's the cough to-day? I could not come to see you yesterday, but I hope you got the nice mixture I sent you over by Jeannie."

"Ou, I ne'er expeckit ye to come," said the old dame in reply, when her guests had seated themselves on two stools beside her; "I'm an auld withered stock noo, no able to serve onybody mysel, so I canna expeck service frae ither folk. Ise warrant ye'll hae brawer friends to look after than puir Elspet."

And she eyed Marion sourly, as if she suspected her of intruding on her own privileges.

"Well, but you got the mixture, and it brought you a good night's rest, did it not?" pursued Katherine, without noticing the insinuation.

"Rest!" was the indignant reply; "awee, I wot it was a windlestrae's rest on a windy nicht then. I ne'er had sic a nicht sin' ever I took it; I just hostit and hostit even on, and never devalued. Na, na, it's nane o' yere drugs that's to cure a host like mine; naething 'll e'er cure it but the spade an' the shool. Gin ye had sent me a drap oot o' the grand bottle ye promised to Peggy neast-by there, I might hae pitten it until my bowl o' gruel, and been mair the better o't. But I dinna ken sae weel how to fleech ye as she does, or I might hae gotten it too."

"You're tired of the raspberry vinegar, then?" said Katherine. "Why, Elspet, you had only to send Ivan to the manse, and you should have had your glass of sherry in five minutes, you stupid body."

"Na, Miss Randolph," answered Elspet, in a tone of triumph, "na, na, I'm no just come the length o' a beggar yet, though I dinna refuse the bits an' bats ye send me at your pleasure. I'm sodger bred, Miss Katherine, but I'm major minded, an' I'll ne'er ask onybody for what I may jalouse they're no willing to gie me."

"Now, Elspet, hold your tongue," replied Katherine, with invincible good-humour; "you know very well that you would apply to me with all your heart if you had a desire for anything I could give you, if it were only for the sake of gratifying me; and you shall have the wine for to-night's gruel whenever I go home. How does the new toy I sent you yesterday please you? You are looking quite handsome in it, I think."

"Ou, it's no that ill," answered Elspet, reluctantly, and as if at a loss for something to grumble at. "But wow! how the bue comes aff on my clean mutches;" and she pushed back the hood of colour'd flannel as she spoke. "It'll haud me ay da' erin' an' washin' them, and ruin me for sape forbye."

"Never mind that, Elspet, it will only give you an excuse for putting on a clean one every day, and that's what delights you," answered Katherine. "Has papa been seeing you lately?"

"Ou ay, honest man," replied the dame, with a wonderful accession of respect in her tone; "he was here this morning, and gied me a lang discourse on the cheerfulness o' Christian hope. Hech me, hoo folk will cumber themselves wi' the mony things o' this sinfu', unsubstantial world: 'gin a' body had as little world's gear as I hae, there wad be the less to fash them."

Katherine and her companion laughed merrily, when they had left her, over Elspet's peculiar ideas of hope and cheerfulness.

"There is the cottage where I should read my lesson," said Marion, playfully, "for I neither know the value of my blessings, nor the error of my discontent."

It were long to follow Katherine through all the scenes of her morning walk, as she led her wandering friend from house to house; now to the dwelling of a bedridden old woman, now to the busy hearth of a happy family. Into all of them she seemed to carry gladness, and in each she found the blessing of the poor and the destitute.

Marion watched the modest and gentle propriety of Katherine's bearing towards these objects of her bounty with unfeigned delight, and the warm interest with which she inquired into their minute concerns, and without arrogating to herself the power of bestowing advice or admonishment, the kindness with which she promised them her own assistance when the case was within the range of her abilities, and her influence with her father in behalf of that which went beyond it. There was a cheerful and gentle familiarity in her converse with them, which seemed quite as valuable to one and all as the benefits which accompanied it, and which secured to herself the adoration of a people, than which there is not a warmer nor more enthusiastically grateful among the families of the earth.

Katherine, on her part, perceived with a throb of satisfaction the success of her experiment on the dormant energies of her friend; and though she forbore from any mention of the subject herself, yet at dinner she rejoiced to find that their morning round in Clach-na-hard elicited a longer and more cheerful discussion on the part of Marion than had followed any incident of her residence among them.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Ha! ha! what a fool Honesty is, and Trust, his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman."—SHAKESPEARE.

LORD DE MAR was a man in the prime and flower of manhood; distinguished by that nobility of person and patrician grace of manhood, which, when they are the fruits of high birth and the accompaniments of large fortune, form

the beau-ideal of an English aristocrat in his most indescribable perfection.

A finer contrast could not be imagined than Lord de Mar presented to his guest, as General Forbes sat at breakfast with him in the library of his magnificent house at Brighton. The one slightly below the standard of middle height, cast in a mould of the most consummate elegance, and with every movement of his frame subdued and harmonized into grace; while his features wore the bland and exquisite polish of artificial refinement, and the very tones of his voice were rendered musical by the absolute control in which every accent was held by the high-bred speaker.

The Highland chieftain was conspicuous in General Forbes. His mould was the mould of a giant, and, with a symmetry of proportion in no respect inferior, he united a degree of physical power which seemed to mark him of a different species; while the open and kindly intelligence of his face, with its long curls of silvery hair, and the military precision of his bearing, were in strong opposition to the lordly and fashionable grace of Lord de Mar.

The conversation of the friends seemed to have been of the most agreeable and cordial tone; for the countenance of each expressed the utmost confidence and good fellowship, and their mutual communications flowed with a rapidity and smoothness which left no room for any suspicion of misunderstanding between them.

At last, when the breakfast-table was cleared, the general broke a momentary silence by inquiring, in a voice which was meant to be quite gay and careless, but in which, to a practised observer, a tone of anxiety, almost of agitation, would have been perceptible,

"By-the-way, have you seen anything of young Chisholm? I understand he is in Brighton."

The general was practically no politician, however intently he might watch the proceedings of the cabinet, and animadverted upon its errors from his own untainted solitude. He knew nothing of the crooked and crafty paths of diplomacy from experience, and yet this question was put with the wisdom of an old tactician, and he watched the effect of its abruptness upon his companion with an anxiety which he was almost unable to conceal.

But Lord de Mar was too well bred to know the existence of such a feeling as surprise, and he answered immediately, with a smile in which, despite its peculiarity of expression, nothing was definable,

"To be sure I have; we meet every day either in my house or at his hotel."

"And do you know anything of his pecuniary difficulties?" pursued the general, doubtfully.

The earl smiled yet more broadly than before as he replied to this question. "Difficulties! my dear general; no, truly, I can see no pecuniary difficulties in a man's prospects who is about to exchange two thousand a year for ten."

"What do you mean?" asked the general; and his voice deepened, and his brow darkened with distrust.

"Why, that government has offered him the office of governor of —," answered Lord de

Mar; "decidedly the most lucrative in the West Indian colonies. Methinks this is no such inconsiderable promotion to the laird of forty miles of Highland heather—saving your presence, general."

"What can have made him sell the property?" asked the general, keenly. "The clergyman of my parish was one of the late laird's trustees, and he assures me that not one sixpence of debt is acknowledged in his will: and I know Keith too well to believe the possibility of any extravagance on his part having embarrassed the property to this extent."

General Forbes imagined that this communication was his most politic course, inasmuch as, by proving the fidelity and extent of his own information, it would leave his opponent without any loophole of escape, and force him at once to the confession of his own concern in the sale of Inverhaggernie; and his communicativeness was equally agreeable to Lord de Mar, since it betrayed the exact line at which prevarication might stop with safety. The smile did not leave his lip for a second, and when General Forbes had finished his sentence, he turned to him with a look of frank and confidential good-will, and said, "I see what you are thinking of, and I am glad that boyish affair has not slipped through your memory, as I feared. Do you know I had arranged all my plans for a run down to Killurie, to put you in possession of the very facts we are about to discuss? and this whole morning I have been hoping that you would introduce the subject first yourself. In short, my dear general, I longed for your advice and assistance, as I invariably do when any emergency presses upon me. The frequency with which I draw upon you for your opinion and support is proof enough of the estimation in which I hold them."

"My opinion can be of very little service to a man of Lord de Mar's experienced judgment," answered the general, dryly. "Support and assistance are what he will never ask from me in vain, when the matter in behalf of which they are desired is worthy the consideration of a man of honour."

"You might have done me the justice to believe such matters as delicately weighed in the balance of my honour as your own, my good friend. But at present I know the nature of your suspicions, and till they are removed I have no right to expect your confidence."

There was an air of wounded feeling in Lord de Mar's manner of uttering these words that spoke to the general's kind heart in a moment, and he replied,

"I pray you to excuse my hastiness, Lord de Mar. I confess to you that the first intelligence of young Inverhaggernie's misfortunes astounded me, and led me not unnaturally back to certain days and follies, of the participants in which you and I are now the only survivors. I acknowledge that I feel myself to be in some sort responsible for the good or evil fortune of the youth, and that I shall not be quite at ease until I understand the exact state of his affairs. Yet I have no right to intrude myself into yours; so, if you will answer me but one question, I shall withdraw my inquiries and my presence with gratitude to you and satisfaction to myself."

"I know what that question is," returned his lordship, frankly; "and if you will lend me your ear for half an hour, I hope to answer it with credit to myself, and all the satisfaction that you can desire."

"Not so, Lord de Mar," said the general, with some sternness; "my question can be answered more satisfactorily in one second. Is the bond still in existence which I believed that I saw you destroy with your own hand twenty years ago?"

"Nay, nay, my good general," answered his lordship, "this categorical mode of proceeding leaves your interest in my affairs at a very low account. Let me tell you the whole circumstances of the case, otherwise it will be impossible for you to appreciate the nature of my reply to this blunt question."

"My Lord de Mar," said the old gentleman, with a grave dignity of tone that was almost a match for his adversary's smooth cunning, "you must be aware that my interest in you and yours hangs upon your direct and unequivocal reply to my inquiry. If my suspicions wrong you, then you shall have no cause to complain of the insufficiency of my repentance for having encouraged them; if they are borne out by the fact, you need not be told that we not only cease to be friends, but that the measures which I shall consider myself called upon to adopt will henceforth render us avowed and professed enemies."

"What measures within the bounds of possibility can produce such an effect as that, my dear general?" asked Lord de Mar, with a smile, which expressed the kind of confidence which no change of circumstance has power to affect.

"Such as the laws of this country authorize me to use in behalf of an injured and defrauded man," answered the general, in an inflexible tone.

"Nay, I can only be the gainer by measures of that sort," persisted Lord de Mar, in a voice of such soft and musical persuasion as almost induced the general to discredit himself, "since I only am the injured person, in being defrauded of your friendship on such visionary grounds."

"My good lord," said General Forbes, in a calm and reasoning tone, as if he would fain be on even ground with his adversary at once, "you will admit that I have some right to ask these questions, and that there is some call upon you to answer them. Is John Chisholm's bond still in existence? Was it by means of that bond that your claim on the Inverhaggerne property was established; and is it to liquidate the debt created by it that young Chisholm is about to sell his patrimony?"

"It is—it was—it is—since I must borrow Garagantua's mouth for the reply," answered his lordship, gayly; "and I am not one whit the less an honourable man from the three affirmatives. Will you hear me now?"

"No, sir," answered the general, haughtily; "I have heard enough. It is now my business to appeal to the laws of England; and after they shall have righted the innocent, the less we hear either of or from each other, the better."

And he was moving towards the door.

"Stay, General Forbes," said his lordship, in a tone of placid and grave kindness. "I have satisfied you, since it seems that in the fortunes

of this boy your feelings are alone interested; it remains now that I should satisfy myself, by pointing out the wild-goose-chase on which you are about to start. In the first place, my good friend, even were I disposed to play the villain's part which you are cutting out for me, the laws of England can furnish you with no authority to annul a deed so perfect in its construction as poor Chisholm's bond, nor to set at naught the validity of witnesses, one of whom can boast a name so honourable as that of General Forbes. I say nothing of the strange effect which must attend the efforts of a man who seeks to invalidate a deed to which his own name has been affixed. But there is one trifling circumstance which I cannot suspect General Forbes of any intention to overlook. His *promise* to myself, his *oath* to the dead, are obligations which none can lightly esteem, and yet presume to sit in judgment where the honour of another is concerned."

General Forbes stood like a man thunderstruck.

"De Mar!" said he, in a tone which was scarce audible from amazement, "you are—you are—" and the old gentleman gulphed down a hard epithet, and added, with a laugh that sounded very like a sob, "you are a clever fellow."

There was a pause of some minutes, during which General Forbes seemed too much occupied with his own thoughts to remark the silence; and Lord de Mar confronted him with such an air of placid dignity as men assume when an exertion has been made more for the sake of indulging others than from any benefit likely to accrue to themselves from the result.

"And now, General Forbes," said his lordship, in the most refined accents of his melodious voice, "now that I have shown you how little your disapproval can affect my *interest*, I would fain prove how valuable your esteem is to my *heart*, by placing this matter in its true and most favourable point of view. You are disposed to think me a bad man. Listen for a few moments, and you will discover that I am but an unfortunate one."

The general made a movement of impatience.

"You will not hear me," said Lord de Mar; "well—at least I shall not suffer alone, since a philanthropist can make no discovery, nor receive any impression, however false, without pain, which is at war with his own charitable views of human nature. I could save you this pang, general, if you would allow me."

The general seemed in absolute agony from the contest in his mind between two opinions. The air of sincerity and ingenuous frankness which accompanied these words was all but irresistible, and yet his preconceived impression was too vivid to be lightly shaken off.

Lord de Mar observed the expression of indecision, and replied to it with an appealing smile, in which it was impossible to trace any shade of triumph or exultation.

"You had not used to be so hard upon your old subaltern, my dear general. It is the first time I ever found it difficult to plead my own cause to you."

The allusion to old days, in which De Mar's light-hearted bravery won his good-will as an ensign in his own regiment, touched the sol-

dier's heart, and he answered in a voice where-in the sternness of high principle seemed struggling with a softer feeling,

"I owe it to myself as well as to you, Lord de Mar, to hear what can be said in extenuation of an act so—so unusual in a man of honour and integrity. I have no right to condemn any one unheard, still less to reject an opportunity of hearing the truth."

The general reseated himself, and fixed his eyes upon his companion in silent expectation.

Lord de Mar thanked him with much appearance of kindness, and then began to speak with the air of one who has much to say, and yet feels perfectly secure of saying it all creditably.

"You are no statesman, my dear general, therefore you can form no conception of the ruinous cost at which the deep game of politics is played by such as have once engaged in it. You know what the extent of my fortune was at the period of my succession—will you believe me when I declare that at this moment, excepting the rental of the property, I have not a guinea in the world? Nay, more—my poor Ida's fortune, of which, as you will remember, I was left the entire guardianship, has been, unwittingly on my part, and to my unspeakable surprise, nearly squandered in the same reckless hazard. In a few months she will be seventeen—the age at which, by her grandfather's will, she has the right to make choice of her own residence and guardians. Can you imagine, General Forbes, any situation more trying than that of a father who is self-convicted of having, however undesignedly, impoverished his own child?"

The general did not interrupt him even by an assent, and he continued.

"About a year ago, while all these matters were pressing upon me, I chanced one day, in the most secret corner of my bureau, to light upon John Chisholm's bond."

"That bond," interrupted the general, hastily, and with the lightning in his eye again, "which I believed I had seen you destroy above eighteen years ago!"

"Yes," replied his lordship, calmly; "but if you will hear me out, you will do me less injustice. The existence of the deed was as much a surprise to me as it must have been to yourself, had you made the discovery. I could not for many a day account for the fact of its reappearance, and was ready to believe myself the sport of some delusion, so mysterious did the circumstance appear to me. Indeed, it was not until some weeks after, that, on missing another paper of importance, the truth flashed upon me. Both documents had shared the same repository, and I presume that, in committing to the flames what I believed to be poor Chisholm's bond, I had burned the wrong paper, and preserved the right one. I swear to you, General Forbes, that if this be not the truth, I can in no other way account for the existence of the deed."

General Forbes, the very soul of truth and honour, would no more have thought of doubting the straightforward veracity of this avowal, than he would have misbelieved that his ears heard it.

"I beg your pardon, Lord de Mar; I have done you great injustice on one point," said he,

earnestly, "and am doubly bound to wait patiently your explanation of the other; which"—and the half cordial tone died from his voice—"you will excuse me for holding in much the heavier account."

His lordship smiled while he resumed his communication, as if the subject of it were more amusing to himself than interesting to the listener.

"Why, really, I must admit, that what follows has very much the air of a romance, with just enough of the ingenuity of the diplomatist to make it a sort of agreeable compound of the world of fancy and the world of life. You have heard of Randolph's rich uncle, who returned from India lately with his half million to leave among the children of his relation, your minister? Well, my Scotch agent wrote me sometime ago that the old fellow wanted to buy a place in the Highlands as near to Glenurie as possible, and wished to know if I was willing to let him have Kinmar at a price which was double its value. I would not do Ida such injustice as part with Kinmar, since it is the oldest heirloom in the family; but I bethought me that Inverhaggernie, with its fine house and its neglected policies, would suit the millionaire to a nicety; and I had heard, you must know, or, at least, had inferred from my intimacy with young Randolph, and my occasional converse with Keith Chisholm, that there was also a fair niece of old Fletcher, to whom he would no doubt bequeath a moiety of his wealth, and who would possibly be persuaded to bestow it and her lily hand on our friend Keith; and then, what are the results? Inverhaggernie returns to its proper owner, I have my forty thousand pounds as a loan, and Chisholm has his trip to the West, where he may live *en prince* with his bride, if he pleases, until the old gentleman's death shall recall them to the possession of their paternal acres."

"As a loan!" said General Forbes, going back upon the last sentence of the speaker as if his wits were too slow to keep pace with its volatility; "what do you mean by that?"

"Why, you know," answered his lordship, "even if Julian be the heir of all, it will be only giving his sister's portion in exchange for his wife's, since I suppose he must make it out with Ida at last; so that not one sixpence which is his or Chisholm's will eventually be alienated from either of them. Why, my dear sir, you do not seem to follow my *roman de la cassette*."

And his lordship smiled in the face of his auditor, as if waiting his approval.

The general's simplicity of mind and principle was utterly thrown out by the crooked policy of the statesman. He could not be made to comprehend the intricacies of the plot. To him it seemed a labyrinth of cunning and treachery, whose only uses were to lead to a point which might be more safely, more speedily, and more honourably attained by the straight path.

"Since you are willing to give Julian a chance with the Lady Ida, why not tell him the state of affairs at once? You cannot believe that the loss of fortune will bring a cloud over his enthusiasm; and the residue of even your unentailed property must be a handsome dower for the wife of a commoner."

Lord de Mar shrugged his shoulders with a look of self-compassion.

"Nay, nay, my good friend," said he, "have a little mercy on the frailty of human nature. To give one's daughter, with her gifts of nature, to the son of a Scottish minister at all, is humiliation enough; and to leave her dependant on his bounty for her wedding-gown is something too lowly for me, poor as I am."

The general made no reply. He was puzzled and overwhelmed with the strange scheme that had just been unfolded. He needed an hour of cool reflection to bring it within the range even of his comprehension, and he felt at a loss whether to give Lord de Mar his confidence meantime or not.

His noble host, however, seemed to entertain no such misgivings. He started up when the clock on the mantelpiece struck twelve, and made his apology for running away in a tone of perfect ease and cordiality. Pleading military business as his excuse, he begged the general's presence at a court-martial in the afternoon, and turned him over to his daughter and his friend Julian for the morning.

"Well done, diplomacy," said the handsome lord, as he sprang into his britchka; and his black eye glittered like the eye of a hawk when the quarry skims fearlessly below.

CHAPTER XVII.

"That blind, rascally boy, that abuses every one's eyes because his own are out—let him be judge how deep I am in love."—SHAKESPEARE.

The evening found General Forbes in a somewhat calmer frame of mind. He had spent the earlier hours of the day in fruitless endeavours to obtain an interview with Keith Chisholm, the object of which he could not very accurately have determined even to himself, although conscious at least of a pressing desire to judge of the light in which the young man regarded his own future prospects. His efforts, however, were frustrated, since he could obtain no information regarding him either at his hotel, or at any of the usual points of rendezvous about town; and even his visit to Julian was sacrificed to the urgency of his search, and his meeting both with him and the Lady Ida delayed till the evening. At four o'clock he had been deeply interested in the old familiar details of the court-martial, and at seven he found himself the centre of attraction to a group of gallant and intelligent officers, whom Lord de Mar had collected round him to dinner, as it seemed, for his own exclusive enjoyment.

The tone of the little society was fraught with pleasant remembrances of other days, and, amid the warm and kindly feelings which it awakened, the jarring discords of the morning had well-nigh disappeared; moreover, the good general's hour of calm reflection had brought him only the conviction that all efforts of his were powerless to avert the decisions of Lord de Mar, and that even his endeavours, or the appeal to the judgment of others, were denied him by the sacredness of his own promise. All that he could ever hope to effect must be by remonstrance with De Mar himself; and he felt that to render such a course successful, his best preparative was to

observe minutely the whole tone, aim, end, and origin of his proceedings.

There was a feeling on the general's mind that he had been won over in his own despite by the smooth manners and plausible reasoning of De Mar; and even while he was conscious that, if all the machinery which his lordship had put in motion were in the end to work out its allotted purpose, no one would ultimately suffer by the result, yet he was chagrined by the conviction that his open and avowed disapproval of Lord de Mar's plot should be capable of producing nothing more beneficial to the cause than a personal estrangement between themselves.

The good general was far from feeling himself at ease, or satisfied by the result of his conference with his old friend; and it seemed that Lord de Mar was quite aware of the fact; for he managed, by a succession of interesting and agreeable subjects of occupation, and a continual attention to the tastes and habits of his guest, to obliterate or counterbalance the doubtful impression that remained, until at last the general was tempted to ask himself whether he did not judge his brother in arms by too severe a test.

To this placable humour he had arrived when a general movement sent the whole party to their coffee, and the old gentleman's heart grew warm with the prospect of shaking hands with his two young friends, both of whom he was assured were in the drawing-room.

General Forbes was the last to enter, and he stood for a moment on the threshold to admire the scene which the room presented, and to single out Ida and Julian from the various groups that were gathered within it. It was a magnificent room, and lighted (to that exquisite point beyond which light becomes a burden) by innumerable perfumed lamps, each of which claimed its own elegant, or luxurious, or classic device. Here was the silver tripod, with its mild radiance, that rendered all shade superfluous; there the light shone through glasses richly stained, and representing flowers of every shape and colour; yonder it came from a porcelain statue of Aurora, and anon from the talons of a golden eagle in the roof, where lamps of delicate alabaster swayed to and fro like censers.

The hangings of the room were of gold-coloured silk, and pilasters of polished ebony, which supported the roof, conveyed a pleasant relief to the eye from the gorgeous uniformity of colouring. There were Persian carpets, and fauteuils of velvet and gold, and a chimney-piece of mosaic, and flowers, and books, and pictures, and statues, and musical instruments, of the rarest and costliest description.

Altogether it was like the palace of a fairy-queen or an Eastern sultana; and the good general smiled and sighed as he whispered to himself, "No wonder that he grieved to tell the mistress of this room that she was penniless."

The Lady Ida was seated at some distance from him, beside a grand piano, on a pile of purple cushions, and with a lute of inlaid sandal-wood upon her lap. She looked the very being which the imagination would select to place in such a scene; with her full, white, hazy-looking robe, that floated about her like a mist-wreath; her small, proud head, with its fair hair knotted up with jewels, and her tiny feet and hands, each glittering with its own peculiar gem.

She seemed busily engaged in putting a new string to the lute, and Julian Randolph was on a cushion at her feet, holding the wire and turn-

ing the screws, with an expression which seemed to imply that the earth could offer him no happier station.

Ida herself looked the picture of happiness; and though she took delight in giving her cavalier all manner of unnecessary trouble, and scolded him for the awkwardness of which he was *not* guilty with all the girlish coquetry of sixteen, yet there was a beautiful innocence in her delicate and joyous youth, and a depth of feeling in the boy's face as he smiled upon her caprice, that brought the moisture to the old general's eyes as he gazed upon them.

He was preparing to disturb their *tête-à-tête*: when a servant passed them carrying coffee, and he saw the Lady Ida fling her lute to Julian, and spring lightly from her resting-place, and after preparing a cup with infinite attention to its ingredients, she stole quietly round to a sofa where her father was seated with some old ladies, and, having presented it, returned in an instant to her place beside Julian.

"Good child!" thought the general; "no wonder that he loathed the idea of defrauding her."

He lingered for a few moments longer, and scanned the outline of the Lady Ida's delicate features as her profile was turned towards him; rejoicing almost unconsciously to find that although cast in precisely the same mould of noble and classical beauty with her father's, there was yet not the smallest point of resemblance between them. The extreme fairness of her hair and complexion was strikingly opposed to the dark olive which distinguished his, and the minute proportions of her face rendered that air of polished refinement a physical peculiarity in her, which seemed in him a consequence of art and breeding. Even the little airy and graceful character of pride which her beauty carried with it, seemed rather a principle of her nature than an attendant upon her consciousness of birth and station; for when the little curl of disdain sat upon her tiny lip, there was ever a courtly smile at hand to succeed it; the small shaft of satire or *balzâne* was levelled at once, and the humour that prompted it dispelled by the indulgence.

These thoughts were passing in the general's mind, and he stood studying the graceful picture which the youthful pair unconsciously presented with a new and eager interest, when Major Moira advanced towards them, and their *tête-à-tête* was interrupted. Lady Ida suffered him to touch the tips of her fingers as she replied to his salutation; but the little mouth expressed its uttermost power of scorn, and even the bright blue eye sent out a spark of impatience at his approach.

"I give you joy, major, of young Hay's honourable acquittal," said she, in a careless tone, and running over the strings of the lute without looking at him.

"Your ladyship forgets," replied the major, something testily, "that I am the complainant."

"Ah! excuse me, I had forgotten," answered she, with a pretty accent of apology; "one so naturally congratulates all the world when the right side prospers—particularly when the right happens also to be the cause of the lowly."

The defendant in the trial of the morning had been a servant of Julian's.

"Your ladyship is proverbial for patronising the lowly on all occasions," said the major, with a bow and a smile which the Lady Ida would have scorned to understand, but which brought

the flush to Julian's brow, and the flash to his eye in a moment.

"Je te repondrois bien, que dans les belles ames Le seul mérite a droit de produire des flammes."

quoted the Lady Ida; "and Corneille has no right to complain of his axiom being found applicable to the case of poor Hay."

The effect of her words was curiously different upon the two gentlemen. The major fidgeted uneasily, as if he would fain have given his tongue the rein; but Julian bent his head downward to conceal the soft smile of gratitude which succeeded his momentary irritation.

"The 'mérite' so honoured by your ladyship," said Major Moira, at last, "is very difficult to be obtained genuine, and often exists only in the imagination of the looker on. It is not a matter of inheritance, like the rank of a gentleman."

"No, thank Heaven—nor of letters-patent, as the rank of a gentleman is sometimes considered," replied her ladyship, with her most imperial curve of the throat. "We must class it, I presume, among the gifts of Nature, along with grace, and beauty, and dignity of mind, and trifles such as are equally independent of rank and circumstance. What think you of the question, Mr. Randolph?"

"I think as your ladyship has taught me," said Julian, with a smile in which the thought of Major Moira was not, "that virtue is a gift of heaven, and not, as your favourite authority has it, 'per sorte o fato'."

Lady Ida laughed and blushed; Major Moira sneered and bit his lip; and the next moment General Forbes revealed himself, and all other matters were forgotten in the delightful bustle of his reception.

The Lady Ida's face shone with enjoyment as she welcomed him with both her hands, and showered questions and assurances upon him before he had answered her salutation. Julian contented himself with one friendly clasp of the hand, and then stood in silence watching the brilliant variations of her countenance.

"What an impudent old fellow I am," said the general, when he had seated himself in the chair she wheeled round for him, "to break in so unceremoniously upon a snug party like this! But we rustics, you know, Lady Ida, are so apt to forget our *bienveillance*, and go just where we are most attracted."

"Ah, general," answered she, holding up her finger, "the magnet has been a very feeble one, or it would have drawn you to it long ago. Do you think I do not know that you arrived last night?"

"My dear young lady," said he, in a grave tone of deprecation, "I am sure you are too well acquainted with the laws of chivalry to suspect a knight, even of such by-gone date as I am, to present himself to the fair before he can come with an unblemished escutcheon. I have been endeavouring to render myself *sans peur et sans reproche*, and now I am come boldly to demand my reward."

"Ah, yes—you were also present at poor Hay's trial," said she, "and I may congratulate you, at least, on the issue, although the major is unapproachable."

"Unapproachable!" repeated the old gentleman, with a smile; "I think the very opposition of such a partisan ought to convince him of the frailty of his cause."

"So do I," said she, tossing her head merrily;

" but he is not bred in your school of gallantry, general."

" Your ladyship ought to remember that gallantry belongs to the triumphant," said Major Moira; " the vanquished have no virtue but submission, and no hope but in the clemency of the victor."

" There we disagree again, major," said the lady, perversely. " I think gallantry, as well as virtue, independent of fate or circumstance—is it not, general? Is there not as much room for magnanimity in the conquered as the conqueror, unless, indeed, truth have been the stake for which they played? In that case, the soul of the vanquished is incapable of any feeling that is good or beautiful; since who would oppose the cause of truth, and not be utterly despicable?"

" I protest your ladyship's eloquence overpowers me," said the major, with the usual expression of a stupid man, who has no reply at hand. " How unfortunate I am in having it all directed *against* me! One would think you had been drinking from the nun's fountain, you are so constant in your opposition to my cause."

This was a favourite hint of Major Moira's when he was anxious to revenge any annoyance from the Lady Ida or Julian. To-night, however, it seemed to lose its effect; for the lady turned to him with an unembarrassed tone, and answered,

" You forget that *I* have a vow never to drink of that fountain. *My* fidelity, therefore, will always remain independent of any influence but that of the feelings which control it."

" It was Mr. Randolph, I believe, that drank so plenteously the last time I met him there," said the major, without deigning to turn his head. " *His* fidelity, I dare say, is quite independent of feeling, in whatever cause it has been secured."

" There you are mistaken," said Julian, with a bright smile, and a clear, musical tone; " since it was to perpetuate a feeling that I drank at all—a feeling that is stronger and more exalted than any which I could name."

" Perhaps you will condescend to explain the nature of this feeling," said the major, with a sneer.

Julian was standing beside the harp, exactly opposite to the seat of the Lady Ida. He bent down his face to the level of the instrument, until his gaze was fixed intensely upon her, and then replied,

" A determination to love what is good and beautiful, in disregard and defiance of all worldly consequences."

At that moment, and before the deep blush that rose to her forehead disappeared, Lord de Mar advanced to place his daughter at the harp, and for half an hour she played to a circle of listeners with great brilliancy and precision. When she ceased, Major Moira had departed. Julian rose to make his adieu, and the general took the arm of his young friend, and walked out with him in the direction of his quarters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

" My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you."

" You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part with."

SHAKESPEARE.

On that night which witnessed General

Forbes's introduction to the gay and polished circle that surrounded the Lady Ida, the caprice of fortune offered a widely different scene to the particular actor in the drama of this history, with whom the general would most willingly have played his part. While gay scenes and smiling faces were glittering in his eyes, and the sense of another's injuries was almost drowned by the festive tones which were around him, how little could the good old general have guessed the sense of forlorn solitude that oppressed his friend, or the scene of care which engrossed him! So mercifully doth the curtain of space divide us from the view of sorrows and sympathies that would destroy us!

At ten o'clock on a cold October evening, Keith Chisholm wrapped himself in his cloak, and went forth in the direction of an unfrequented suburb of the town of Brighton. The moon was shining bright over head, but an hour of heavy rain had left pools of water in all the inequalities of the road, and the moonbeams were reflected from the wet slates of the houses, and from the plashy pavements, with a comfortless gleam that had in it no power to enliven. There was a gusty and cutting wind, that swept the face of heaven of every cloud that rose upon it, and brought the stars out clear, and sharp, and frostily on the cold blue skies.

Keith drew his cloak tight about him, and pushed on through the wet streets with the air of one who is bent on matters of extreme interest. His head was bent slightly downward, as if in anxiety or reflection; his brow was feverish, and his breath came thick, as if something more than the mere fatigue of his hasty progress were acting upon mind and body. He looked as if the use or the issues of a few hours were to him of more importance than years of life.

At last the point of his destination seemed to have been gained, and he stood before the entrance of a small, mean-looking house, placed between two of loftier pretensions, but retired by a considerable space behind them, as if for shelter or seclusion. A little plot of grass was before the door, with a few sombre and smoky laurels, that looked as if the breath of heaven never disturbed their torpid branches. The gravel on the walk was covered with green damp, as if no footsteps ever trod upon it. The knocker of the door was blackened with smoke, as if even the friction of hands came not near it; and the windows were shrouded in blinds of green canvass, dingy and withered, and looking as if they concealed nothing worthy of being revealed.

Keith knocked with a loud, honest, and gentlemanly rap, and the noise rang strangely among the chambers of the desolate-looking building, as if it were unaccustomed to such attacks.

In a few minutes the door was opened by a maid-servant, and Keith stepped quickly, and yet with an anxious step, across the threshold. He was shown into a small, close, faded parlour, which was dimly lighted by a red-hot fire and a glimmering candle, and of which an old and shrivelled-looking man, poring over a ledger, was the sole occupant. The old brown dressing-gown and ragged leatheren slippers, the stooping carriage, and the keen eye peering from a shaggy brow, told a tale of which the moral was self-evident; the tenant of the silent mansion was a money-lender.

Keith returned the salutation of his host in a

hurried tone, and, taking off his hat, pushed his hair from his flushed and humid forehead with a look of care that proved his anxiety to have gained its extreme point.

"Well, sir," said he, at last, in a tone of some haughtiness, as if fearful of betraying the agitation and urgency of the moment, "I hope you have come to a decision upon the business of the morning, and that you find the securities I submitted for your consideration such as may obtain for me the loan."

The old man shuffled about among his papers as he replied, "Why, it is a round sum, Mr. Chisholm, and our acquaintance is a short one. It would be more satisfactory if a little longer time were allowed me for the arrangements."

"I have already told you, sir, that the thing is impossible," returned Keith; "if the money is not procured immediately, it will be useless to me; and as I consider my own securities entitled to the most absolute confidence, you have only to announce your resolution of withholding it, and I shall procure the sum elsewhere."

The usurer looked perfectly unmoved by these threats, and continued his objections with the air of one who has the dice in his own hand.

"I am not accustomed to dispense with the usual number of signatures to my bonds, young gentleman, and you must recollect that your own is all that as yet adheres to it."

"Does the name of a cabinet minister appended to that letter avail nothing?" answered Keith. "Surely the appointment which it confirms is security enough for the interest, and the lands which the money goes to reclaim must always furnish an equivalent to the principal. You are fastidious, sir; the rate of interest which I have offered you will, I doubt not, ensure me a more adventurous speculator elsewhere."

And he took up his hat as if to put an end to the interview.

The old man replied only with a smile; and, taking up an old pocket-book from its resting-place at his elbow, he handed it to Keith, and bade him satisfy himself as to its contents.

Keith counted the notes with a hurried and eager hand; hastily affixed his name to a paper presented to him; and then, drawing his cloak once more around him, abruptly left the house.

It was morning when he reached his hotel; and, marking the hour upon his watch with a look of chagrin, he flung himself into a chair with the manner of one who is not sufficiently at ease in mind to feel any desire even to court the repose of body. He laid his watch upon the table, and observed the lazy hands move round as if he would have spurned even time with his own impatience. He flung up the sash, and looked out upon the cold and lifeless moonshine, as if he would have chased the orb of night from her place, and called the streaks of dawn to fill it. He strode up and down his room as if its limits were too small to hold him, and then sank into his chair again, and mused with the knitted brow and distorted lip of heavy, wear-ing-out anxiety.

At last the day broke and deepened; the sleeping town awoke, and the watcher hailed the sounds of life and labour as if they brought him happiness. The church bells tolled successively five, and six, and seven, and the whole world of busy life was stirring around him.

Keith seated himself and wrote a short note; then rose and plunged his burning forehead into cold water, and refreshed himself with a careful

and deliberate toilet; and then, taking up his hat, passed once more forth upon the streets of Brighton, and, after a brief walk of ten minutes, stopped before the mansion of Lord de Mar.

To his infinite relief, his inquiry after its host was answered in the affirmative, and he was shown directly to the library, that same apartment in which but the previous morning we witnessed the *tete-à-tête* breakfast of his lordship and General Forbes.

The table was covered with papers, and Lord de Mar was seated beside it, apparently busy with their contents.

"Ah! Mr. Chisholm," said he, rising to receive his guest, "I am rejoiced to see you; this is a fortunate visit both for me and my good friend General Forbes, who has for two days been so anxious to meet with you. I hope you will do me the honour of breakfasting here."

Keith replied with a stately bow, as he declined the seat towards which his host had waved his hand.

"Your lordship will excuse me. A few minutes of your lordship's valuable time will suffice for the arrangement of my present business, and when it is concluded I shall leave Brighton upon the instant. I am come to pay my debt to your lordship; or, if the arrangement likes you better, to become the purchaser of my own property."

Keith drew up his figure to its utmost height, and spoke in a tone of infinite pride and haughtiness, and Lord de Mar heard him with well-bred attention before he replied.

"I am exceedingly sorry, my good friend, that you did not come to me an hour sooner. It is no longer possible for me to promote your views in this matter. I trust that you may still be able to arrange it; but, in the mean time, I have just concluded a most advantageous sale of Inverhagernie to our mutual friend Mr. Fletcher, with the particulars of which my agent has orders to acquaint you in the course of the morning."

The look of lofty defiance died from the face of poor Keith Chisholm as this overwhelming intelligence reached his ear, and his head sank on his bosom for an instant in brokenness of heart. But the honourable pride of his nature was still uppermost, and he recovered himself with a violent effort, bowed his acquiescence in the ruin of his hopes, and, without exchanging words with their destroyer, passed from his house a free man and a beggar.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty."

WORDSWORTH.

UNFORTUNATELY for Julian Randolph, he had mixed too little with mankind, previously to the time which made him a member of the gay society to which he now belonged, to be aware of the sort of influence which a knowledge of his prospects was likely to exercise over the world's regard. He very soon found himself the idol of the circle in which he moved. His beauty of person, and extreme fascination of manners and address, were indeed sufficient of themselves to obtain for him distinction of no mean cast; while his frank and generous cordiality, and eager adoption of every scheme of amusement which was communicated to him, filled up the sum of his popularity.

And Julian's was not a nature to trace out the source of such agreeable results too closely. He experienced all the hilarity of a warm, young spirit, which joys in the sunshine of universal good-will; and while the genial influence was upon him, he felt little desire to inquire into its causes. To be an object of love to others was too much in consonance with his most powerful and prominent tastes—too much in unison with the general tenour of affairs within that home of which he was the ornament and the pride, to admit of any feeling of wonder that the distinction should have been so easily and speedily acquired elsewhere.

Julian had been reared in the very sunshine of fondness and admiration. The cordiality of his companions did not therefore affect him with the same intoxicating influence which it might have exercised over a mind less inured to the atmosphere of prosperity; yet even upon Julian it could not fail to produce, in some degree, the evil most to be dreaded. In a very short time the excellent plans of study and retirement which had been laid down in his first letters to Killurie were overturned by the inroads of idle people on his privacy, and the perpetual sacrifice of his time to their demands; for he, like others who win the world's good favour, was condemned to pay the penalties that attend on popularity.

How the knowledge of his affairs became so soon the public property of the regiment, Julian was altogether at a loss to divine; but that it was so, one even of his thoughtless and incurious nature could not long fail of perceiving. Every extravagant pastime, every scheme that was more expensive than another, every plan which required a heavy purse for its accomplishment, was invariably submitted to Julian; and though met at first with a resolution to abstain from any participation in such excesses, it invariably ended in receiving his support. He was the most unselfish of human beings. An act of direct self-indulgence was a rare occurrence with him: but when applied to for assistance in promoting the indulgences of others, or urged to join in pursuits for which personally he entertained no manner of predilection, Julian always found that to withhold the support which it was as flattering to his vanity as it was gratifying to his good-nature to grant, proved a higher exercise of self-denial than it was possible for him to practise. As a matter of course, he soon found himself, like the generality of those who have been endowed with similar properties, and exposed to similar temptations, plunged in the most galling and harassing of all embarrassments to a young and generous temper, pecuniary difficulties.

Again and again, when the extent of his own imprudence flashed upon him, he would brace himself up with resolutions of firmness and self-command for the future; and to any new proposal which threatened to endanger them, he would reply, "I have no money;" or, "I cannot afford it;" or, "I am determined to pay my old debts before I contract new ones."

But Julian's courage and self-respect did not carry him so far as to make these confessions in the sober and earnest tone which alone could lend them anything like an appearance of sincerity. Who would listen to a confession of poverty, made with a playful shrug or a smiling phrase of self-compassion, by the acknowledged heir of twenty thousand a year? And Julian had not yet attained to that spirit of manly integrity which would have enabled him boldly to de-

clare the insecurity of his own prospects, the terms on which he stood with his uncle, and his present inability to answer, as he desired, the demands that were made upon him. He had been treated so often as the object of envy and gratulation on the score of his worldly expectations, he was so often quoted as the one who need feel no compunctions visitings on the score of his own expenditure, he had been so continually alluded to as the acknowledged heir of an Indian fortune, that by-and-by he insensibly began, in his own mind, to give a tacit assent to the general opinion. It was so much a matter of course with all around him to speak of his wealth as inexhaustible, that he slid almost involuntarily into the general impression; and every fresh expense which he incurred seemed only to rivet the belief a little closer, by adding to the importance with which it served to invest him.

Heretofore the subject had been but little in his mind, and his father's wise and judicious counsels went far to preserve the moderation and justice of his views. But now, when the case presented such a different aspect, when the general voice seemed to sanction that reliance upon fortune which his own folly rendered necessary to his peace, the indifference with which he formerly used to regard the final adjustment of Uncle Fletcher's affairs was put to flight by the anxious and uneasy conviction that its issue had become to him a matter of vital importance.

Other considerations were not wanting to enhance the value of his uncle's favour in the eyes of Julian. The perpetual contact into which he was brought with the youthful object of his adoration could not fail to place before him, in a truer light than any former experience had done, the distance at which fortune had ranged them from each other; and the accessories of high rank, far more than rank itself (for Julian's pride brooked no disadvantageous comparison with the best blood of the land), continually reminded him that the stroke which deprived him of that fortune, the value of which every day seemed so fearfully to enhance, would also sever from him completely all hope of the fairer possession, opposed to which his uncle's gold weighed as dust in the balance.

No one could deny that Julian seemed in every respect fitted to be the favourite of fortune. His habits were all of the most refined and highbred description; and his taste, which, during the boyish days of the past, had wrought but with the pure and simple elements of Nature, seemed to require only the field of action which his present position afforded to take the exquisite polish which soon made his word a law in all cases that came within the range of his possible arbitration.

Nobody seemed willing to make a choice, be it of a horse or a waistcoat, without the sanction of the young mountaineer; and Julian felt an especial pride in the exercise of this elegant faculty, since, more than any other, it brought him into perpetual and strong contrast with the peculiarities of his rival, Major Moira. A thrill of pleasure, which he himself would scarcely have chosen to acknowledge as originating in such a source, seldom failed to accompany the perception of each triumph, as often as the quiet, expressive smile of the Lady Ida marked her appreciation of the superiority of his own elegant appointments over the clumsy magnificence of the major.

Fine taste, however, although an inestimable

auxiliary, is, if it stand alone, but a froward commander, whose movements, in despite of an exhausted exchequer, lead but to permanent discomfiture; and this Julian began to discover, as soon as his vanity came to be gratified only at the expense of his independence. If Major Moira chose to display his ungraceful self on a stand-hope of such an elevation as to overlook both taste and fashion, and if Julian must needs eclipse his fancied glories by a tiny curricule that looked as if it had been brought from Fairyland, it was but natural that, as the triumph was all on one side, the expense should not be confined to the other; and so, after the first keen enjoyment of Ida's girlish delight was passed, Julian could not restrain a pang of self-upbraiding as he pictured the grave disapproval with which his father would have regarded such a piece of extravagance.

Nor was Lord de Mar himself slow to furnish his young subaltern with occasion of expense, which his surveillance ought to have been exercised to prevent; for when a rainy morning drew the colonel to the billiard-room as a resource against ennui, he continually challenged Julian with some such words as these: "Come, Randolph, the stake shall be counted in rupees by way of compliment to you to-day;" or, "Well, Randolph, we must try what we can do to make the stake worth *your* while, or we shall have you playing at random."

It was with such terms of flattering familiarity that poor Julian was often led to venture his whole quarter's allowance on a single game, and on more than one occasion he found himself the loser.

Meantime his correspondence with those at home could scarcely fail, in some degree, to take its tone from the feeling of anxiety and remorse which gradually gained ground within his bosom. He was forced to confess the overture of his excellent plans of study and improvement, and to fill his letters, if they were to be filled at all, with details of hunting, and racing, and driving, and boating; mornings squandered away at some fashionable lounge, and evenings swallowed up by the pursuits of public amusement.

The attention paid to him by Lord de Mar still occupied a large portion of Julian's letters, and the enjoyment afforded by his society was still dwelt upon in terms as vivid and heartfelt as heretofore. But there was an occasional allusion to the calm and innocent days of his boyhood, and a frequent longing for leave to revisit his home, which fell with a tender sadness upon the devoted heart of Katherine; while the casual mention of his Uncle Fletcher, light and careless as it was, struck an indescribable apprehension into the mind of Mr. Randolph.

Upon the whole, the minds of the circle at the manse were somewhat overshadowed by anxiety as to the fate of the two dear ones who had passed beyond its limits. No tidings had arrived from Keith; and perfectly distinct as was the nature of the apprehensions occasioned by his silence on the one hand, and the altered tone of the letters of Julian on the other, it would be hard to determine to which of them pertained the deepest and most affectionate degree of sympathy.

CHAPTER XX.

"Oh wonderful, wonderful!
Most wonderful, wonderful!
And yet again wonderful!
And after that out of all whooping!"

SHAKSPEARE.

ONE bleak, wintry-looking morning, when Katherine and her friend were sitting at work in the parlour of the manse, Mrs. Randolph having gone to sleep in her easy-chair, they were not a little surprised by the grating of wheels upon the gravel, and the appearance of Miss Forbes in her low garden chair, drawn by its single stout pony, and affording room for none but its single occupant.

It was a cold, lowering day, and the lady was so wrapped up in plaids and pelisses, that it seemed a mystery what should have tempted her to venture out at all in weather which demanded so many precautions.

She waved her whip before the window, and Katherine was at the hall door in a minute to welcome her friend, and to give orders to Donald regarding her equipage.

"Well, girls, make much of me," said the lively visitant, drawing off her fur gloves, and putting her feet upon the hassock which Katherine placed for her. "Here am I, in a day cold enough to skin a toad, straight from a blazing fire and a new novel at Killurie, both of which I left for the gracious purpose of inquiring how you all do, and whether you have received any letters from Keith. Katherine, child, is it to you or Marion I must apply for the news?"

Katherine answered, with a blush and a smile, that no letters had arrived either from Keith or Julian—to the general mortification of the household.

"Ah, well!" replied Miss Forbes, "then I may bestow my tediousness upon you for the rest of the morning without hope of reward. Let the fire alone, Kate, and don't disturb your mother. I will just gossip for a single hour, and then to horse again. And first of all, how are you, Marion? you look but misty this morning. I think these rough northern gales destroy you, child. I am tempted to long for the time which will see you fairly established in the luxurious West. I have not a doubt that the change of climate will renew your constitution."

Marion shook her head, and Katherine interposed eagerly.

"Dear Miss Forbes, do not talk so. Surely the fresh breezes of Glenurie are far more likely. I trust she will never hazard the experiment."

"Be quiet, Katherine; you talk like a fool," said Miss Forbes. "What—what, the breezes of Glenurie, forsooth, and the solitude of Inverhaggernie, are what you would substitute for the blessings of eternal sunshine, the interest of ever-changing scenes and new impressions, not to mention the honour and glory of vice-regal dignities. For my part, I find all my self-command requisite to preserve me from envying her little excellency already."

"You are very kind, dear Miss Forbes," said Marion, with her calm and sorrowful smile. "I require all your benevolent devices to make me regard my change of residence with any feeling short of wretchedness."

"Really," said Miss Forbes, in a tone of surprise, "a becoming gratitude you manifest for the gifts of fortune, I must admit. I wonder if any other girl of your age would be as insensible to the dazzling nature of her prospects? But you



are sickly, my poor child, both in mind and body, at present, and unable to appreciate enjoyment of any kind. Wait till the balmy gales of your new abode shall have revived the body, and then see whether the mind be not partaker in the benefit."

"I would rather the gales blew over my grave in Saint Feolan's," answered Marion, with a smile.

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" said her pertinacious opponent; "your patriotism is not quite so strong as you imagine, Marion. Nevertheless, it is a pretty attribute of rank and dignity, and will become your future excellency exceedingly, when its force shall be turned to the country of your adoption, and you shall have begun to teach the young idea of civilization to shoot in your brother's domain. You seem quite unconscious of the grand scale on which you will soon be called upon to practise Katherine's theory of legislation, which you admire so much in Clach-na-hard."

"The prospect of such a responsibility would only render my fears the heavier—could it exist," answered Marion; "but I have no apprehension of any duty being imposed upon me more active than my usual one of simple endurance. Even this, for ten years to come, seems something formidable, my good friend."

"Keith does not think so," returned Miss Forbes. "He is rejoiced beyond measure at having his appointment confirmed, and fully sensible of his advantage over half the world besides in these fortune-hunting days. You will not find him casting lingering looks behind on his forbidden home."

"Shall I not? Resignation in leaving it will be a new lesson to learn from him," said Marion, sadly.

"I have letters from my father to-day," said Miss Forbes, "and he seems to think otherwise."

"You had letters!" exclaimed Katherine, "and yet you have told us no news, although you knew that we were disappointed."

"Softly, softly, my dear Kate," returned she; "depend upon it, my news will be forthcoming, and, but for its importance, would have been told before."

"Its importance!" repeated Katherine. "Is Julian well? Has anything happened to Keith? Please do not keep us in suspense, my dear friend. Are they all well?"

"Quite well, my good Katherine," replied Miss Forbes, "and yet my intelligence is of the strangest—Keith has at last consented to the sale of Inverhaggernie!"

Marion bent forward as if she had scarcely heard aright, and repeated mechanically, "Consented to the sale!"

"Nay, nay, I don't know why I should be afraid of announcing such a trifile," continued Miss Forbes. "Inverhaggernie is already sold, and by the end of next month Keith's preparations for embarking will be completed. There! my dear Marion, with such a noble instance of self-command before you, will you not rouse your energies in emulation of it? Your brother is free from all his worldly trammels; it remains for you to relieve him from the apprehension of anxieties yet heavier."

Miss Forbes spoke in a tone of extreme kindness, but there was a quiver of anxiety perceptible in her voice, and she watched poor Marion's face with great eagerness. The latter became

very pale, and her breath came hastily from the force of her surprise; but Katherine had her in her arms immediately, and poured comfort and kindness upon her with the ardour of her own nature and affection.

It was in vain. Poor Marion struggled and struggled with her feelings, and strove to send back the tears that rose over her soft, melancholy eyes for a few minutes, but they were not to be repressed; and, returning Katherine's caresses with one momentary clasp, she motioned to her to let her go, and walked out of the room.

"Poor thing!" said Miss Forbes, as the door closed upon her; "one would think her fate had exhausted its last arrow now. I am half angry with myself for having been the bearer of such news at all. But I knew that she intended to return home to await her brother's arrival, and, as I was ignorant of his arrangements, I feared lest she might encounter some shock before we had prepared her for it. I am sorry she did not stay to hear me out."

Katherine looked up through her tears to ask if she had not already heard the worst.

"Why, yes," answered Miss Forbes, "it is certainly the *best* of it that is to come. Have you no curiosity to learn who has become the possessor of Inverhaggernie?"

Katherine turned her eyes away again, and answered peevishly, "No, no; some Lowland cotton-spinner, of course."

"Come, Katherine, don't be a fool," answered Miss Forbes, good-humouredly, "but thank Providence that your lover's property has fallen into the hands of one who is very likely one day to make you the possessor of it." Katherine opened her eyes. "No other than Uncle Fletcher!"

Katherine rose from her seat and sat down again, clasped her hands, and then placed them over her heart, laughed, and cried, and blushed, and then asked whether her friend were not mocking her.

"Not I, truly," replied she; "I have it under the general's sign manual this very morning. Do not concern yourself with the truth of it, but see that you be equally secure of the results; for Inverhaggernie must be yours, or Marion's grief will not admit of comfort."

The cloud was over Katherine's face again, and when she spoke, it was in a tone of the utmost anxiety.

"Oh, dear Miss Forbes, this is scarcely happy news. How terrible it will be to dwell within his home, and hear another called its master! How will his free spirit bear such a mode of recovering his possessions? and how do I know that they will ever be recovered at all till it be too late? Oh, I wish—I wish almost that an utter stranger had bought it."

"My dear Katherine," said her friend, "this is the first time I ever saw you either ungrateful or unreasonable. It seems to me that the purchase of the estate is an express interposition of Providence in your behalf. Could there be any arrangement more unexceptionable? Keith's departure saves him the pain of seeing his father's halls occupied by a stranger, and you the awkwardness of visiting them under such circumstances; while, in all probability, long before the period of his return, you may extend your hand to him with his own title-deeds as its dower. And if your delicacy is offended by the possibility of courting your uncle for the sake of his legacy, be thankful, at least, that Inver-

haggerne is in *your family* till its rightful owner shall be able to redeem it."

The latter consideration brought the blush and the smile back again, and Katherine thanked her kind friend for the interest she manifested in all relating to her; and they discussed the prospects of the Chisholms for a while with undivided interest, until Miss Forbes found her wit excited by Katherine's absence of mind and pre-occupation, and she rang the bell to order her fairy carriage amid much raillery and badi-
nage.

Katherine saw her drive off, and then, returning to the house, she betook herself to seek admittance at the door of Marion's chamber.

CHAPTER XXI.

"My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,
Even now forsake me."—SHAKESPEARE.

It was not in nature that Katherine, all artless and disinterested as she was (and a being more unselfish or undesigning was never framed of dust)—it was not in nature that she should hear the suggestions of Miss Forbes, and not be moved by them. The joy, the glory of restoring Keith and Marion to their country and their home, made her heart bound with happiness even in the imagination; and when she told herself that this fortune, this mine of wealth and joy to her would be unmissed from the huge possessions which her hopes bestowed on Julian, she felt inclined to believe the clouds of her fate forever scattered.

These sweet, bright images lent a glow to her cheek and her eye as she entered Marion's room, which was strangely at variance with the pale, statue-like figure of the young mourner.

"Do not grieve, dearest Marion," said she, "do not be so utterly cast down. Hope still, dearest. I am sure that all will be well at last."

Her cheerful and winning kindness finished the overthrow of her poor friend's composure, and Marion burst into tears.

"Oh Katherine," said she, in a voice that expressed the very depth of woe, "you do not know how this blow destroys me; it is like losing my dear father once again, to part with the home he loved so well; it is an omen that the happy days I have spent in it are indeed gone forever. Inverhaggerne was my last tie to life; it was all that bound me to the very memory of happiness. And Keith, my noble brother, who would have toiled with his own kind hands, early and late, to ransom his home—oh Katherine, you know him too well to believe this tale of his acquiescence—no, I know that they have snared, cheated him into the sacrifice. He would not part with Inverhaggerne till it was wrung from him. Ah, Katherine, do I not know what he will suffer in resigning it?"

"Dearest Marion, be comforted," returned Katherine, in a cheerful voice; "he will not resign it, or, at the worst, it is at least only for a while. What is he going abroad for but to earn the means of reclaiming his home?"

Marion shook her head, as if this were but another and a sharper sting.

"Ay, so I thought," answered she, bitterly, "and the belief made even the prospect of our exile endurable. But now, my brave Keith is only going that he may have food and raiment, and a grave in a far land. Wo is me! the last

of my father's house is driven forth to seek his bread from the stranger!"

Katherine had never seen her friend indulge her grief in a burst so violent as this, and she found herself obliged to give way to its first outpouring before she could collect courage to breathe a word that spoke of comfort. At last, however, Marion was won to take an interest in the details of her own misfortunes, even so far as to inquire who the new possessor of Inverhaggerne might be; while Katherine taxed her ingenuity to guess, with a tone of playfulness which aroused her attention by its want of sympathy with her own sad humour; and when at last the truth was announced, the deep blush and the bright smile which accompanied the statement seemed to strike upon Marion's mind with an effect as powerful as the intelligence itself.

Some impulse of modesty or diffidence prevented Katherine from following up her announcement with a single comment; yet the change in Marion's deportment left her in no doubt as to the effect which it had produced upon her, or the train of ideas to which it had given rise. If the expression of sadness was not entirely dispelled, it seemed to lose its bitter intensity, and to be in some sort changed to one of grave and earnest reflection. A hundred lights and shadows flitted over the mourner's face as Katherine gazed upon it, and after a long pause of silence Marion kissed her friend, and said, in a grave and somewhat solemn tone,

"God's will be done, dear Katherine. In his hand are the issues of life."

This was all that Marion uttered upon the subject, and yet Katherine felt that each understood what was passing in the breast of the other; and it pleased her to find that, without the pain of suggesting such a source of comfort, she had yet the happiness of seeing her friend's thoughts abstracted from the subject of her own immediate griefs and privations.

In a few minutes they separated, and Katherine walked abroad to soothe her spirit by the influence of the solitude, and to realize by reflection the airy phantoms which were flitting about so bright and dazzlingly in her brain.

It was the first time that ever the desire of riches had entered the pure and most unworldly heart of Katherine Randolph—the first time that any idea had gained admittance which could by any possibility nurture that wish into a hope. When she used to please her own affection by picturing Julian as the heir of his uncle's wealth, it was without the remotest belief that she herself might ever profit by his prosperity, except inasmuch as the contemplation of it would be seen to minister to her happiness. And yet now, when the probability of her becoming rich was for the first time submitted to her, a thousand circumstances arose within her mind to confirm it. Uncle Fletcher loved her, she believed, as well as he seemed capable of loving anything—certainly much better than she had any reason to believe that he loved Julian. What wonder, then, that, bestowing the bulk of his fortune on her brother, he should retain this fragment of it for herself? Or even if Julian did become the unlimited possessor of the whole, was it so unlikely that he should bestow this dower upon a sister whom he loved so much?

Poor Katherine's heart throbbed with its new hopes, so pure, so generous in their very worldliness; and visions of Keith enriched, recalled,

re-established in his home by her instrumentalities, danced before her till her eyes swam in tears of joy and gratitude.

Then the indelicacy and selfishness of reckoning upon the fortune of another while he was yet capable of enjoying it, arose to stain these beautiful images with shame and self-reproach, and for a while she despised herself for the unusual and involuntary crime. The appropriating to herself that upon which she had no claim, seemed to her, though performed but in imagination, to be an act of dishonesty, and she blushed as the conviction rose into her mind that of so foul an offence she had been guilty.

By-and-by, however, her gentle and virtuous thoughts regained their equilibrium, and she raised her eyes to heaven with a mute appeal to the protection and guidance of Him who held the issues of her fate in his hand, and would direct them in wisdom and in love.

To this stage of her musings had she come when her father appeared in sight, and she hastened forward to meet him with a brow smooth and calm, and a spirit tranquillized by its own innocent workings, and the influence she had invoked.

Mr. Randolph looked grave and anxious, and his first salutation convinced her that he also had been dwelling on the subject next her heart.

"How is Marion? Not utterly broken down by these unexpected news, I trust? Miss Forbes has almost alarmed me for her."

Katherine gave a more encouraging report of her friend, and then waited in silence her father's comment on the intelligence of the morning.

"This is very sad," said he, at last, in a voice indicative of much disturbance; "no aspect of affairs could have been less pleasing to me than the present: the sale of the property I had taught myself to expect; but that it should have fallen into such hands, I confess, has almost unhinged me."

Katherine's heart sank at the tone of these words, so different from the flattering auguries which Miss Forbes had drawn for her from the very circumstance which had called them forth, and she awaited the conclusion of her father's sentence in disappointment and despondence.

"It will be a never-ending recurrence to the trial of this day, when we have occasion to visit Mr. Fletcher. I confess myself foolish enough to feel almost as if it would be an injustice to Mr. Chisholm to visit my own kindred within the walls of Inverhaggernie. God's will be done!"

And he sighed, and his brow contracted with an expression of uneasiness, which seemed, for the moment, to defy his powers of control.

"I was thinking, dear papa," said Katherine, "that it was rather a subject of thankfulness that Inverhaggernie was still, as it were, *among us*, since by that means Keith might be enabled, at some far-off period, to reclaim it, which could scarcely be expected had it fallen into the possession of utter strangers."

"Do you think Uncle Fletcher a person likely to buy an estate for the purpose of holding it in readiness to be returned to the original owner at his own convenience?" asked he, in reply.

"No, papa; but in the course of nature, Uncle Fletcher must resign Inverhaggernie even before Keith may be able to purchase it."

"Well," answered her father, "and how is your uncle's death to promote Keith's claim upon it?"

"Why, then, papa," pursued Katherine, "Julian will hold Inverhaggernie in trust for him as long as the period of his banishment may continue."

"My dear Katherine, my dearest child," said Mr. Randolph, in a tone of grave and earnest remonstrance, "I entreat of you to overcome this blind appropriation of the gifts of fortune. It distresses me beyond measure to find you mingling with every anticipation of life, hopes which have, in reality, little basis beyond what your imagination has lent them. Rely upon it, Katherine, that he whose hopes spring from any root but his own faithful and honest exertion, will one day find that the only fruits that they can produce are bitter disappointment. I am sure I have not now to tell one so humble and so contented as my Katherine, of the pernicious effects of flattering visions, such as these, upon one who has his own fortunes to earn. It is my earnest desire to render Julian independent of these unstable prospects, by convincing him of their uncertainty; but I succeed very indifferently in the attempt with you."

Katherine blushed deeply, and a sensation of pain shot through her mind at the reflection that Julian was not exclusively the subject of her hopes. But a moment's consideration cleared her brow, and she replied with the accustomed cheerfulness of her innocent and modest submission.

"Well, well, dear papa, neither Keith nor Julian will spare their own efforts for independence; and if 'conduct is fate,' I am not afraid of the result."

She changed the subject gradually, and her unwearied buoyancy of heart and temper soon dissipated the dark clouds which hung upon her father. He delighted to be so comforted, and opened all the recesses of his mind and feelings to the soothing and healing influence of her good-humour, till his very affection seemed haltered and deepened by its effects.

So doubly blessed is the exercise of our affections in promoting the happiness of those we love, even by the little effort of whiling away a gloomy humour. We are twice rewarded—once in the restoration of peace to the beloved, and again by the beautiful association by which we ourselves are linked to their happier hours!

CHAPTER XXII.

"My meaning in saying he is a good man is, to have you understand me that he is sufficient."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALTHOUGH Julian's letter had ceased to be, even to Katherine, the source of unmixed pride and joy which she had found them on his first departure, yet her simple nature admitted of no suspicion which could convert the happiness with which she had ever anticipated their arrival into dread or apprehension. She suspected that Julian was not so happy as she had hoped—that the gay and sanguine temper which he carried from Killurie was become saddened by the chilling touch of experience—she could perceive, even among the gayest topics in his letters, that the very popularity which he enjoyed, and the adulations which came to him from every quarter, came not unmixed with its shade of bitterness; yet from what source this proceeded, or by what agency it was conveyed, Katherine's

most eager scrutiny was exercised in vain to discover.

Each allusion to the Lady Ida in Julian's letters was made with the same boyish enthusiasm—the same happy, and, as it seemed, grateful delight, that used to give its tone to the converse of other days, while the attentions of Lord de Mar received all their accustomed tribute of cordial acknowledgment. So that it was no shortcoming in *that* quarter which could account for the pervading tone which, all but imperceptible to every other eye, was yet sufficient to wake up the affectionate anxiety of Katherine.

Major Moira, though frequently spoken of in terms of disdain or indignation, claimed no such important place in the correspondence as would admit of the notion that he could influence the tenour of it; and every other mention made of Julian's fellow-soldiers was in a strain of frank good-will alone, or of that complacent sense of one's own popularity which softens our allusions to those who bestow it.

All these circumstances had been weighed and turned over in the mind of the devoted sister, as she walked one morning before breakfast in the direction from which she expected the postman. Julian's last letter was still fresh in her remembrance, and its tone pained her more than she would willingly allow even to herself. It was not the tinge of sadness or of vexation overspreading it which made her heart ache, for to soothe *that* was, she knew, always within the reach of her own affection; but there was a sort of reckless levity in this letter which contrasted painfully with the pure and simple feeling perceptible in his earlier correspondence, and which made her tremble for the first time in her life, not lest, breathing the worldly atmosphere which surrounded him, Julian should at last take a taint of its pollution, but that the world's fruits, which had hung so temptingly before his mind's eye, might have yielded him only the ashes of disappointment.

One passage in that letter she found it impossible to understand correctly. Talking of the imposts levied by fortune upon her favourite sons, he added, "The case is doubly hard of him who must pay the penalty without any more substantial distinction. *I* have a more thankless fate than Shacabae himself, being not only supposed to feast on dainties which are merely imaginary, but expected to pay for them besides."

Katherine brooded over these words until she could hardly fail of striking out something like their real import. Julian was recognised as the heir of his Uncle Fletcher—that seemed clearly enough a part of his meaning; and that the distinction carried no solid advantage with it, was an inference which he evidently meant his correspondent to draw. But that Julian was already in pecuniary difficulties did not once enter into the simple heart of his sister to conceive.

Katherine was, perhaps, less alive to such a probability than if her father's position had been one of more importance, and his income of greater extent. As it was, the narrow sphere of Killurie offered so few opportunities for the indulgence of expensive and luxurious tastes in general, and Julian's, in particular, had always been so entirely within the compass of his father's powers to gratify, that Katherine sought

through the past, the present, and the future for a solution of his apparent uneasiness, without the spectre of poverty once rising up to appal her. Her ignorance prevented her from contrasting the sphere in which Julian now moved with that within the compass of which his boyhood had been spent—where the simple habits of a simple family, if they failed to pave the way to absolute profusion, at all events set all efforts to calculate expenses at defiance. There was, therefore, no legitimate ground even for speculation, and her anxiety was but deepening every minute, when the appearance of the postman on his shaggy pony put a sudden stop to her reverie.

Two letters were put into her hand, one addressed to herself from Julian, the other in the business-like characters of Mr. Fletcher, subscribed on the envelope to her father. The envelope was torn from Julian's in a moment, and her eye skimmed over the contents with the eagerness which is felt only by the anxious and the loving hearts of home.

And Katherine's beat quick when she beheld at the top of the first page the words "Private and confidential!" She read them as if they had been ominous of evil, and she by no means deceived herself in the surmise.

The sad and strange details of that letter sent Katherine home with a leaden step, and a heart filled with dread and anxiety. What a relation was there! What a record of follies and errors, and of struggles with himself ere he could bring himself to disturb the innocent calm of her spirit, by seeking from her the sympathy which she knew so little how to withhold.

Katherine wept and trembled as she read the description of difficulties and embarrassments, such as she had hitherto looked upon only as the exaggerations of fiction or romance. And yet there did not arise one thought of blame or reproach to Julian. It was the suffering he must have endured which alone seemed present to her—it was the cruelty of his position, which exposed him to all the liabilities of wealth, and yet denied him the capacity of meeting them. How hard it seemed—how unthinking of Uncle Fletcher—thus to delay, or, rather, to withhold the allowance, his purpose of settling which upon Julian he had ostentatiously declared!

Poor, poor Julian! his spirit was too bountiful and liberal to endure the yoke of a mean-economy, liable, as in this case it was, to be misunderstood by those with whom he associated.

Katherine rejoiced that he had applied to her, and praised the dutiful affection which led him to implore that the intelligence of his folly should be withheld from his father. It is true that the expedient proposed in his letter both startled and alarmed her. It ran thus:

"I have no resource but one, dearest Katherine; and if anything were wanting to convince me of my own reckless and heartless selfishness, I should find it in the fact that I am driven to make use of it. I have convinced myself, and you, I presume, also, that an application to our father would but overwhelm him in unavailing sorrow. He cannot relieve me if he would. One hope, however, still remains: Mr. Fletcher could surely spare five hundred pounds from his annual thousands to him whom he once desired

to countenance as the future possessor of all. But I dare not appeal to him in such an emergency; my doing so would render me absolutely worthless in his eyes; and if you, dearest Katherine, feel the same repugnance to make the application—if you consider the ground of his extreme favour and kindness shown to you last summer as insufficient to warrant you in such an undertaking, do not hesitate for one moment to say so; and surely your wits and mine together may be able to strike out some plan less difficult of execution."

Katherine shrank with involuntary repugnance from the task which Julian had imposed on her. It had been her pride and joy to preserve that total independence of Mr. Fletcher, which enabled her and those she loved best to stand with him, for the present at least, on a footing of perfect equality; and now to come before him as a solicitor of alms—a trembling suppliant for his bounty—and that bounty comprehending such a sum as five hundred pounds! In any other business she could have undertaken cheerfully to engage with her uncle; but in one which involved money matters, she knew that nothing would mitigate the harshness which seemed natural to him, even could her own sense of humiliation leave her free to exercise the playful and unconstrained kindness which had availed before.

The notion of concealing the name of the person for whom the money was required seemed to her preposterous. Uncle Fletcher would not entertain the notion for one instant that she could require such a sum for her own use; and she feared it was equally natural that he should speedily determine who was the real suppliant.

And yet Katherine acknowledged that Julian was right in committing the affair to her mediation. She perfectly agreed with him in believing that a personal application on his own part to the old man would tend only to incense him. She was also glad that he had confided his difficulties to her rather than to his father. She was glad that he had been wise enough to choose the best mode of relieving himself; and painful and repugnant as the task of applying to Mr. Fletcher appeared, the devoted sister hesitated not one moment to decide on performing it.

The next consideration was the manner in which her application could be made; and while she was pondering upon the terms in which a letter might be couched, it suddenly occurred to her that the epistle which she carried in her hand from Uncle Fletcher would in all probability arrange that matter for her. She did not doubt but that the old man had written to announce the precise date of a visit to the manse, which had been for some time in projection; and as its object was to give him the opportunity of visiting his new purchase of Inverhaggernie, Katherine could not repress her tears as she contemplated the additional pang which the old man's arrival was destined to inflict.

A few hours ago, and she had looked forward to her uncle's arrival as a trial of her fortitude, and patience, and temper, which no earthly consideration could augment; a few hours ago, and she had considered her powers of endurance and self-command, her endeavours to soothe and to sustain, taxed to the uttermost by the agony which it would cost poor Marion to witness the

installment of a stranger in the home of her forefathers. It had then seemed to her that the exertion of encouraging and comforting Marion under a trial which pressed with almost equal weight upon her own heart, would be a load which her strength was wellnigh unequal to sustain; and now that this fresh and yet more irritating weight was added to the burden, her spirits wellnigh sank under its pressure. Her last rock of hope and consolation seemed indeed shivered, since Julian, the thought of whom used to sustain and cheer her whenever the sorrows of Keith and Marion pressed too heavily at her heart, was become to her but an object of bitter anxiety.

Alas, poor Katherine! The very atmosphere which she breathed was laden with sorrow, inasmuch that even her buoyant and sanguine spirit could scarce sustain itself; for not the least afflicting feature in the case was this, that on her personal exertions everything seemed to depend. And then came the question, more easily asked than answered, How could these exertions be so directed as to work out any practical benefit to the sufferers? For the first time in her innocent life, Katherine wellnigh forgot that the winds have always been tempered to the shorn lamb; and she walked home, scarcely venturing to hope that He who for a wise purpose had sent the shadow, would in his own good time send the sunshine also.

"Oh, how small a part of human suffering is that which affects ourselves alone!" thought she; "how easily borne would be the pain which wrung no heart save our own! It is the sorrow of those whom we love that bows us down—the participation in miseries which we see and feel, yet are destitute of the power to relieve."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Your suit is of moneys;
What should I answer you?"

SHAKSPEARE.

As Katherine had expected, the letter which she carried to her father contained the announcement of Uncle Fletcher's intention to visit his new property. It was in the writer's usual style of correspondence—cold, brief, and business-like; and declared his intention to breakfast at the manse in the morning, and to proceed thence to Inverhaggernie.

There was only one sentence in the letter at variance with Katherine's preconceived notions of her uncle's frigid nature; it contained an allusion to Marion, which, though brief and ungracious in itself, yet conveyed to the mind of Katherine an impression of delicacy in the old gentleman which was far from being in keeping with the sternness of his ordinary bearing.

"It would oblige me," ran this interesting paragraph, "if your daughter would find ways and means of removing the young lady during my visit to the place. She will not probably relish the being superseded by me, and will, no doubt, be considerably in my way besides."

Katherine could not help being touched by the tone of consideration for the young orphan which her own kind and loving nature extracted from this trifling sentence. She answered it

by a postscript to her father's letter, in which she thanked the old man for his forethought regarding her friend, assuring him, at the same time, that Marion was already an inmate of the manse, and that his farther acquaintance with her would only deepen the consideration he had already evinced for her situation.

While such were the pleasant reflections to which Uncle Fletcher's tenderness of Marion's feelings gave rise, Katherine was not for a moment forgetful of the arduous task which Julian had required her to perform. Her heart, indeed, sank within her as she contemplated the removal of the single hinderance which stood between her and the opening of the little drama, from her judicious or injudicious management of which results so important must arise.

Two days more, and her uncle would be in the house, and the opportunity of serving Julian afforded, to embrace which seemed, in her eyes, only less terrible than the pain of disappointing him. Her pale cheek, and anxious and absent expression, were sufficiently accounted for by the sympathy which, on Marion's account, the approaching visit awakened, and yet she felt how necessary it would be to elude the affectionate watchfulness of her father, who knew every variation in her ingenuous countenance too well to mistake the depth or the nature of the feeling which from time to time overshadowed it.

It was a bitter secret to bear about with her, and every allusion to Julian, every expression of surprise at his long silence, every casual mention of his name, made her shake with fear and confusion, as if those errors had been all her own, of which she had only been made the depository.

To a girl of Katherine's open and gentle nature, such care as this was load enough to sustain; yet it came not alone. Another painful task divided her thoughts for a time with that which threatened to engross them. It was necessary to inform Marion of the approaching visit of Mr. Fletcher, and quite fruitless was every endeavour to conceal from her the real motive of his presence.

"Yes," was her quiet reply, when Katherine expressed the probability of her uncle's arrival; "he is coming, I suppose, to visit his new residence, and doubtless to examine the furniture, and to choose what he wishes to retain. My poor little stock will not tempt him, at least."

And the faint crimson rose in poor Marion's cheek, and the tear came to her eye, which never failed to bring over the heart of Katherine such a flood of sympathy as wellnigh overpowered her.

At last the two weary and desolate days drew to a close, which, even while they furnished Katherine with her reprieve, seemed laden with a weight of sadness that made their termination a relief; and the morning dawned which was to bring Mr. Fletcher for the second time to Killurie.

At five minutes before nine, his carriage, a new green chariot, stopped at the door, and its occupant descended from it, buttoned up in the identical brown greatcoat which had been his armour of proof on that well-remembered day when he proved inexorable to all Katherine's entreaties for a sojourn of five minutes longer.

The remembrance crossed her as she welcomed him, and sent a chill of apprehension to her heart.

The old gentleman, however, seemed in the best possible humour. Katherine had calculated so well the time which his quiet brown horses would take for their sober trot along the little avenue, that the urn was smoking on the table, the toast brought in, and the eggs boiling merrily in their little brass pan upon the dining-room fire as he entered.

The comfort of the scene was not lost upon him, and his first words, after exchanging salutations with Mr. Randolph, were, "I was pretty sure you would not keep me waiting for breakfast;" accompanied by a smile more benignant than Katherine had yet received from him.

Marion was late, as usual, and Katherine took advantage of her absence, at the beginning of breakfast, to prepossess her uncle in favour of the young orphan. She excused her lack of punctuality on the score of bad health, and enlarged upon that fidelity to her brother which braved both bodily suffering and the trials of a sea-voyage, rather than yield to the entreaties of her friends and stay behind.

Katherine's eloquence was not without its effect; for, when Marion at last appeared, Uncle Fletcher rose from his seat to acknowledge her bow, and even shuffled about as if a very little encouragement would have made him place a chair for her beside himself. But Marion seated herself on the other side, and Mr. Randolph took the best means of obliging her by continuing the conversation.

No mention was made for a long time of Julian, and Katherine was in hopes that her self-possession would not be put to the test; but Uncle Fletcher destroyed such a hope by abruptly inquiring whether Ensign Randolph were well, and as much pleased with the profession of arms as he and his friends had expected.

The old man's peculiar phrase, no less than the tone in which he uttered it, was ominous of evil, and Katherine left her father to reply to it.

"We have the best accounts of him," answered Mr. Randolph; "he is a favourite of his colonel, and a friend of all his brother officers, whose characters and fortunes render them fit associates for him."

"I am glad to hear it—heartily glad," returned the old man; and Katherine rejoiced over her father's ignorance, even while, in the very next instant, a bitter pang followed the remembrance of how different a tale she could have told.

The breakfast came to an end, and Uncle Fletcher's good-humour seemed to be increasing every minute. He ventured a remark or two to Marion, and she answered in voice so soft, and with a look of such meek resignation in her melancholy eyes, that even his rugged nature seemed to yield to their influence, and his manner to her gradually acquired a tone which in any other human being would have betokened sympathy and respect.

In course of time Mrs. Randolph appeared, and even to her inane and foolish compliments Uncle Fletcher listened and replied with unbroken equanimity. Once or twice he pulled out his watch, as if fearful of overstaying his time;

and at last he announced that he had ordered his carriage round again by twelve o'clock.

"I shall spend only a few hours at the place," said he, "and shall trespass on your hospitality till to-morrow morning, when I must return to Edinburgh. Miss Katherine, I hope, will have no objection to a drive, as I am dependant on her guidance, and must rob her of this forenoon. I am not going to request your company, Miss Chisholm," added he, turning to Marion, "because Inverhaggernie is your home, and must continue so until you leave this country. I have only one thing to say, which is this: that if you should be disposed to defer your departure until your brother shall have prepared for receiving you abroad, or until you be better able to bear the hardships of a sea-voyage; or if you should be induced to remain behind altogether to await Mr. Chisholm's return, I can only say that the south wing of the house shall be entirely at your service, and neither I nor my people consider it in any other light than as your own."

This was the longest oration Katherine had ever heard from her Uncle Fletcher, and it seemed to have cost him a world of awkwardness and exertion; for, before Marion had recovered from the tears which it drew from her, he was half way round to the stables.

Katherine almost forgot to soothe and comfort her friend, so entirely did the prospect immediately before her absorb her mind. There was something terrible in the idea of acting as Uncle Fletcher's cicerone through the well-known premises of Inverhaggernie. She felt as if she were depredated thereby to instal the old man in the home of her best friends. She could not bear the thought of it, even although a more convenient opportunity of opening her own business could not be desired. She shrank with irrepressible repugnance from the long tête-à-tête.

Alas! Katherine's was not the first generous heart which has found itself constrained to set a value upon that which nothing but the strong might of its affection could have enabled it to endure.

It would be long to tell of the efforts by which Katherine managed to entertain her uncle, and to preserve his good-humour from flagging throughout their drive of fifteen miles. Anxious she doubtless was to introduce the subject next her heart, yet she was continually frustrated by the apprehension that their present good-fellowship might be changed into estrangement; and Inverhaggernie was gained without any allusion to the subject.

Katherine performed the duties of cicerone with a pang of which the bitterness was not to be measured by the calmness of her countenance. Every chamber and passage where she had been accustomed to wander in the bright days of the past, and which seemed associated with soft images of hospitality and affection—every object which filled them, and which was looked upon as sacred to the dear inmates who had first introduced them to her regard—how terrible it seemed to see them scanned and traversed, and to hear their uses weighed and calculated in the cold, business-like phraseology of the new proprietor! She felt as if she were participating in an act of sacrilege. She could almost fancy herself the author of some cruel

outrage to the feelings that were most dear to her. Even the eye of the old woman who attended them, and who, with her husband, remained alone in the deserted mansion, made her blush and shrink as if its glance convicted her of injury to the dear ones who had so often welcomed her to these desecrated chambers.

Poor Katherine! and yet, as often as the strong feeling of self-abhorrence rose in her mind, and the regret that any consideration should have led her to put such violence upon her own best feelings, the counterbalancing remembrance rose with it to check all other thoughts, that Julian's interest, Julian's happiness, demanded the sacrifice.

This was a trying day to Katherine, and, as she re-entered the carriage to return home, so entirely overtaxed and exhausted seemed the energies of mind and body, that she almost sank under the reflection that her greatest trial was yet to come. She was quite aware that in the social party of the evening there would be no opportunity afforded her of discussing confidential matters, and that, if the drive were concluded before she had braced her courage to the required point, Mr. Fletcher would, in all probability, leave the country, the necessary words remaining still unspoken.

Under such an incitement she essayed again and again to introduce the subject, but the words stuck in her throat. She felt that even the hope of serving Julian could not reconcile her to the degradation of becoming a supplicant to Mr. Fletcher, while the melancholy business which she had just assisted to carry through had no tendency to set her right either with him or with herself. She was conscious of a feeling not far removed from aversion, while she thought of him as the usurper of Keith's or Marion's place; and if it were a grievance to beg a favour at his hands so long as he stood in the position of a relative only, it was a thousandfold more repulsive now that his interests and those of her dearest friends seemed at variance.

At last some casual allusion to Julian's name forced her into the dreaded subject at once, and after a slight pause which followed some remark of her companion's, she said, in a hesitating tone,

"Do you know, Uncle Fletcher, I have often thought of late that you understood Julian better than any of us, when you said the army was not the best place for him in a time of peace like this. It is, I do believe, too expensive a profession for a youth of his means and habits."

"Humph!" rejoined Uncle Fletcher, with his most caustic tone, and a keen glance into the speaker's eyes. "You may remember, young lady, that it was on no such grounds as these that I objected to the army as a profession for your brother, but because the idleness and vanity which a soldier's life engenders were precisely the sort of things to nurse the present faults of his character and supply him with new ones, at the same time that it afforded him ample scope for their indulgence. I never had any doubt but that the results would bear out my prediction."

Katherine received no accession of courage from these words; but her love was sufficient to sustain her, and she replied, in a tone of patient remonstrance,

"I do not think, my dear sir, that Julian can be considered vain, and from the charge of idleness I think even your own observation is sufficient to acquit him."

"No great proof of the absence of either quality is to be found in the choice of a profession of which the duties are strutting about day after day in a red coat, and dancing attendance upon the daughter of a smooth-tongued jackanapes, who makes use of the authority he possesses over the silly boys subordinate to him for no higher purpose than to flatter and cajole them into fulfilling his own selfish designs," answered Uncle Fletcher, testily.

Katherine paused for a moment, and then answered with a sigh,

"I have often wished that Julian had served under some other colonel."

"I am glad to hear it," was the rejoinder. "It shows that one member of the family, at least, retains the use of her senses. Pity they could not have been made available a little sooner. Your father's views and yours seem to differ on the subject."

"Papa is not so well acquainted with some matters regarding Julian's position as I am," returned Katherine, "and, of course, cannot be expected to judge so well."

"More the pity, Miss Katherine—more the pity," interrupted Mr. Fletcher, hastily. "No good comes of keeping secrets from a father. You have said nothing which I like worse than this."

"Do you think, then," pursued Katherine, very gently, "that such concealments are not palliated by the desire of saving pain to those we love best?"

"The pain is likely to be increased tenfold, if the discovery, as it inevitably must be, is made in the end; but," added he, with a sour smile, "the sufferings of other people are often made to stand proxy for those of our own self-love."

Katherine's drooping spirits with difficulty stood out against the unkind tone of these remarks, and there was a perceptible quiver in her voice as she spoke again, which might in itself have gone far to soften a heart of less impetuous stuff than Uncle Fletcher's.

"I do not think that poor Julian has committed any error more flagrant than in many other young men with far inferior principles has been easily pardoned."

"Not having been informed of the nature of his error, I cannot be expected to judge," was the reply. "But if, as I imagine, he has contracted debts which cannot be paid without entailing inconvenience and mortification on his family, I presume you do not mean me to look upon this as an offence easily pardoned."

"No," answered Katherine, with a tearful endeavour to smile; "but I mean that you should take into account the temptations to which poor Julian has been exposed, and the peculiar circumstances under which he has erred, and then, perhaps, you will see that by others, at least, he has not been judged thus harshly."

"The judgment of others has no influence upon mine," answered Uncle Fletcher, coldly.

"Yes, but it has," returned Katherine; and she laid her hand upon his arm, and looked up with a frank, sweet smile in his face. "The judgment which others have formed of your

heart will not be without its effect in exciting you to confirm it. I am sure you will not disappoint all the opinions I have formed of you, by refusing to assist poor Julian in his dilemma. You are the only human being to whom I would apply in a similar emergency, and I could not have felt thus without an impression that I should succeed."

"I am sorry, young lady, for your own sake, that you should be so apt to take hasty impressions," answered Mr. Fletcher, dryly, and at the same time withdrawing himself from her grasp. "I cannot consider myself responsible for errors, either of judgment or otherwise, for which I can discover no ground of excuse. If Mr. Julian Randolph had condescended to listen to the advice of his superiors, and put himself in a situation where the means of earning an honest livelihood might be within his reach, he would not now have been reduced to the humiliation of begging from those upon whom he has no claim."

Katherine possessed the two most valuable attributes of Christian love in a very eminent degree, for she both suffered long and was kind; but the tone of these harsh and unfeeling words wounded her to the quick, and the warm blood that rushed over her cheek and forehead, and the hasty compression of her lip, proved that it was not without some exertion of self-control that she restrained the hasty reply which rose to her tongue. She was too much accustomed, however, to such discipline, and too sensible of the duty of exercising it, to fail of commanding herself; so she turned away her head, and looked steadily out of the window, with the determination to keep silent.

But Uncle Fletcher was otherwise disposed; he fidgeted on his seat for a minute or two, and then said, in a slow, unfeeling sort of tone,

"You have disappointed me, young lady, as most people do on whom I rest my good opinion: I had begun to think you one of the few who could make a friend and keep one, without desiring to put him to any use. I had imagined you too frank and undesigning for such a proceeding as this; but I am undeceived, and have made one step more in experience."

There seemed, to Katherine's view, as if something more than the mere dislike of parting with his money might be traced in these words, and the looks and tones which accompanied them, and to these Katherine exerted herself to reply.

"Mr. Fletcher," said she, turning round, and addressing him in a grave and earnest tone, with just as much of wounded feeling in it as served to give a more impressive seriousness to her manner, "you shall at least have no reason to complain of a want of frankness on my part. You have shown me that you prefer the truth, at whatever expense it may be spoken, to any of those civilities by which people may try to soften it; and, in pursuance of your own system, I must tell you that you are the only human being who would characterize my present application to yourself by the degrading term of begging; and, moreover, that no one but you would consider himself justified in asserting that my brother was without a claim upon you. Julian disdains the idea of fawning upon you for the fulfilment of your own bargain. He is too proud,

400 honest, to sue and petition for that which was voluntarily offered for his acceptance. But you ought not, on that account, to have misled him as you have done. You must remember that your own distinct announcement first gave Julian his present claim upon you. You wrote to my father, desiring that the boy should henceforth be looked upon as your heir. You avowed your resolution of settling upon him during your life that which was to render the use of wealth familiar to him; and, as a matter of duty, he was made acquainted with the generosity of your intentions towards him. It was not likely that Julian would consider it a duty to keep these intentions a secret, although by his own instrumentality I am sure they have never been made public. You must be aware, likewise, that a youth occupying the position which the world has assigned to him, is exposed to temptations to extravagance a thousandfold greater than would have assailed Julian if left in his natural sphere; and you also know, that neither have you ever warned him on what grounds to resist such temptation, nor furnished him with resources which might prevent them from being so considered. I have no desire, Mr. Fletcher, to gain your assistance to Julian; I could not now accept of it without repugnance; but I wish to show you that the displeasure with which you regard my present application might at least be modified by the share in its cause which every impartial judge would award to yourself. My brother has doubtless been guilty of a very serious error, but no fault could be more foreign to his nature than a selfish extravagance; and if you had not misled him and others regarding his position in society, I am very sure that none such would ever have been attributable to him. Under these circumstances, I cannot believe that I have appealed so much to your generosity as to your justice. You have thought proper to refuse my request, and I need not inform you that you will not suffer the same annoyance a second time."

Katherine turned away her head again, and the drive was completed in total silence.

The evening was spent in the bitterest ill-humour on the part of Uncle Fletcher, and, despite the unwearied exertions of Katherine, in a universal sensation of *gêne* and discomfort to the rest of the party.

The old man ordered his carriage at eight in the morning, and, having drunk his coffee with all the sullenness of the previous night, made his adieu to the party and went his way; but, as he parted from Katherine, he left a slip of paper in her hand, unaccompanied by a word or look of allusion to its contents, and, when she opened it in her own room, she found that it was a bill for a thousand pounds.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"There is a letter will say somewhat."
SHAKSPEARE.

How warm and ardent were the expressions of gratitude which filled Katherine's letter of acknowledgment to Uncle Fletcher! How joyous the tone of that which accompanied the precious bill on its way to Julian! She almost forgot the grave and earnest warning with

which she meant to temper the latter, so blessed was the conviction that, for the present, all her brother's troubles were at an end; and that the clouds which for some time back had overshadowed his correspondence, would be discoverable there no more.

For a while Katherine tasted the purest and holiest degree of mortal happiness—that which springs from the success of our efforts in the cause of those who are dear to us; and all that came within the influence of her happy presence participated in the halo of light and cheerfulness which floated round her steps.

Marion's melancholy alone was too deep-seated to yield to her affectionate sympathy. Her usually downcast eye would indeed occasionally turn with a gleam of pleasure on the bright countenance of her friend, but it was evident that the meek and patient dejection of former days was settling down upon her with an additional weight which grievously overburdened her feeble constitution. Every trifle affected her; a momentary thoughtfulness of Katherine's awoke her most jealous apprehensions of some indefinite evil which was concealed from her. A day or two longer than usual of silence on the part of Keith entailed upon her an agony of dread; even an interruption in Julian's correspondence was attributed to some unaccountable connexion with her brother's movements.

A fortnight had elapsed since Katherine's important packet to Julian left the manse, and anxiety lest it should have miscarried, added to the natural impatience for her reward in the thanks and happiness which she anticipated from Julian, made the arrival of the postbag an event of almost equal importance to both the friends; for Marion, too, had letters of her own to expect, by which Miss Forbes's news concerning Keith would be either confirmed or refuted; and her anxiety to receive them, though exhibited in a very different way, was not, perhaps, less urgent than that of Katherine.

At length the wished-for courier arrived, and the modes in which the two friends greeted the delivery of his despatches might have been accepted as a tolerably accurate index of their respective characters. Marion, without speaking a word, sat the image of pale and trembling anxiety; Katherine, flushing with hope and eagerness, snatched up the letter-bag, and pulled it open in an instant. Nor was the feeling of anxiety confined exclusively to the friends; for Mr. Randolph looked eagerly from Marion's pale cheek to Katherine's hurrying hand, with a kind of glance of sympathy and interest, which it soothed the former to perceive might be attributed as much to his own concern in the matter as to the interest which he felt for herself.

Katherine emptied the bag of its contents, and sorted them with trembling. First came a bundle of newspapers from Brighton, dated a fortnight previously; then a card of invitation to Inverawe; next a cobbler's bill; and, finally, a large, well-folded, professional-looking letter, the subscription of which, though written in a gentlemanly hand, and comprehending the name of Mr. Randolph, was in the writing neither of Keith nor Julian.

Marion sighed, and turned her head away till the tears that rose to her eyes should be driven

back again; while Katherine continued to watch her father's countenance, as he perused that strange epistle, with an interest that made her heart beat. She knew the handwriting of all his correspondents, and this was evidently from none of them; yet that it contained matter of more than ordinary interest was very evident, for his cheek flushed as he read, and his glance passed rapidly over the page, as if he were more anxious to gather the sense than the letter of its contents.

At last he finished and resfolded it, and, looking up, caught Katherine's eye fixed eagerly upon him. He smiled gravely, as if he understood its expression, and then handed the letter across to her in silence.

Marion was absorbed in her own disappointment; and Mrs. Randolph, just conscious that the bag had come without bringing letters from Julian, had returned to her breakfast, and was entirely occupied in mourning over the singeing of the barley scones, as she turned them over one by one from the napkin, so that Katherine was quite at liberty to finish her task without interruption or comment. The letter ran as follows:

Edinburgh, November 1.

Sir,—As the confidential agent of John Fletcher, Esq., of Inverhaggerie, I take the liberty of addressing you, for the purpose of announcing the alarming illness of that gentleman. On the evening of the 28th ultimo, Mr. Fletcher returned from the Highlands, whither he had gone to inspect the property of which he has lately completed the purchase. On the morning of the 29th he sustained a shock of palsy, and is now deprived of speech, and in a state from which, in the opinion of the physicians, his recovery is impossible. I am authorized by the medical gentlemen in attendance to apprise you that an hour's delay after the receipt of this may deprive you of the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Fletcher in life.

"I am, sir, with much respect, yours,
"WILLIAM MONEYPENNY."

The tears sprang to Katherine's eyes as she concluded, and, on looking up, she could perceive that her father was equally shocked and affected. The poor old man! Solitary, friendless, and dying, at the moment when he had "goods laid up for many seasons"—when wealth and honours flowed upon him, and he was about to establish himself under his own vine and fig-tree! How forlorn and desolate was he in the loneliness of his deathbed, where no hand nearer or dearer to him than that of a law-agent was by to smooth his pillow, or minister to his wants, or even make known to his distant relatives that his life was in danger.

Katherine was quite overpowered as these thoughts crowded into her mind. She forgot everything except the solemn and awful certainty that she should see him no more—that the chain of familiarity which had so lately united them was broken by the last messenger of humanity—that the plans and purposes which but yesterday had engrossed her brain, were all dissipated by a breath from the nostrils of Omnipotence.

Katherine had never lost a relative before; and the terrible proximity of death absorbed her

young heart with solemnizing thoughts, and heightened into affection the kindness with which her gentle nature had been wont to regard the old man. She wept as if years of intimacy had endeared him to her, and ties of long-confirmed regard were broken by his removal. All his crossness, all his formal and exacting vanity, all his caustic sarcasm, was forgotten in that moment of natural and genuine feeling; and poor Katherine, the most unostentatious of heroines, was unable to command her emotion, or to conceal it.

In a few minutes Mr. Randolph made the contents of his letter known to the other members of the family, and directed Katherine to prepare for his departure within the hour.

His words seemed to awaken Mrs. Randolph from the apathy which was habitual to her, and she exhibited some symptoms of interest in the matter before them. But the feelings of her husband and her child had no place in her philosophy. She read the letter two or three times when it was handed to her, and then betook herself to the usual refuge of silly women under the excitement of strange news, that of *wondering*, or speculating on every possible probability which might result from them. She "wondered" if the old man would die; she "wondered" if he had made his will; she "wondered" if Julian would obtain leave of absence to attend the funeral, and if he would have time to come and see her; she "wondered" if the money would be left entirely to Julian, or if there were any relations who might expect legacies; she "wondered" who would be the executors; and, finally, she "wondered" whether Mr. Randolph would have time to get a new coat before the funeral, and whether she could confide in him for the peculiar tint of a gown for herself.

Marion could see that all this folly jarred with poor Katherine's softened feelings; for she blushed deeply, and the tears sprang more than once as she replied to her mother's idle questions. Yet she exerted herself with her usual cheerful activity to provide for her father's comfort, as far as the short space of time granted for the purpose would allow. She packed his portmanteau with her own hands, and watched Donald as he strapped it on the pad of his own pony, which was to bear him to Inverness, for it was Donald's business to attend his master and to bring back the horses. She reminded her father of all the directions which it was necessary for him to leave, in order that affairs might go on in their customary routine during his absence; and promised to communicate to Julian the news of the morning, as well as his father's request that he would hurry down and be in attendance upon his uncle's deathbed.

At last Mr. Randolph's preparations were concluded, and all the messages with which he was charged to Julian repeated by his mother, his promise of writing secured by Katherine, and his adieus spoken to all.

"God bless you, my child; take care of your mother and Marion," said he, as he kissed Katherine in the porch.

The next moment he was on horseback, and she watched him till he disappeared with a mixture of feelings which it would be impossible to define.

The air of cheerful and happy tranquillity.

which shed itself ordinarily over the circle at the manse, and which was attributable to no influence but the active and gentle ministrations of its young mistress, seemed this day to languish in such fashion as it had never done before ; for all Katherine's endeavours to promote the respective comforts of her charge were unsuccessful, and time hung heavily and unimproved upon their hands.

Marion had not recovered the disappointment of the morning, and seemed, besides, abstracted and absorbed by some nameless subject of reflection and anxiety. Mrs. Randolph went on "wondering," and jarring the feelings of her companions by broad allusions to matters too sacred for even their confidential discussion ; while Katherine, despite her numerous attempts at self-control, found the very effort at cheerfulness grate upon her humour with an indescribable dissonance.

Katherine wrote her letter to Julian, while her mother, as usual, fell asleep over her book, and Marion sat in the window with her hands crossed listlessly on her lap, and her eyes fixed upon the bleak, cheerless scenery of November.

When her letter was finished, Katherine went down stairs and ordered dinner, forcing her attention to all the customary minutiæ of her household duties, and endeavouring to quell the restlessness of mind by the wholesome activity of body. She told Marion her recipe with a playful expression of self-contempt when she returned, and, after a mutual acknowledgment that the mind of each was too ill at ease for conversation, Katherine produced her crayons and pencils, and, handing Marion Miss Forbes's new novel, that had been sent from the castle for their perusal, begged of her to put her own and the listeners' thoughts to flight by reading aloud while she drew.

The short day closed at last, the curtain was drawn, and the lamp lighted, and Mrs. Randolph and Marion established at backgammon ; and Katherine, to avoid her friend's observation on her silence and abstraction, played, for the rest of the night, airs such as bring healing and elevation to the soul, and offend only those who mourn without the chastened and holy spirit of meek submission that makes grief a luxury and a balm.

So passed at the manse the first day of Mr. Randolph's absence ; nor was it till Katherine found herself in the seclusion of her chamber, with all the house at rest, that she gave her thoughts the rein, and suffered them to bear her over the wide field of reflection into which the events of the few past hours carried it. She felt oppressed with the weight of circumstances ; she was unprepared for the sudden stirring of her fate, and closed her mind's eye uneasily and fearfully from the examination of its surface. There seemed a mysterious providence in the incident of the old man's life lasting only till the property of Inverhaggernie should be secured through his means ; and before she slept, Katherine thanked God upon her knees for his benignant arrangement.

Katherine could not bear to dwell upon the final issues of her uncle's mortal sickness ; she shrank in self-abasement from the calculation of its effects upon her own fate ; and yet the conviction pressed upon her with a sick and

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anxious weight, that the wellbeing of all dearest to her in life hung upon the events of the next few days.

Poor Katherine ! she had no tender and watchful friend in her mother to lighten her load of care by dividing it, to win from her maiden timidity all the pressing anxieties which she blushed to acknowledge even to herself—to soothe, and encourage, and direct her ; and she felt, for the first time, that the weight of her own thoughts was as much as she was able to sustain. Marion Chisholm, beloved and confided in as she was, seemed, in Katherine's modest and delicate apprehension, the very last of earth's denizens with whom she could share her thoughts. But Keith ! her kind, and noble, and honourable, and faithful friend ! the soft tears swelled over her eyes as she acknowledged to herself that, were he but near her, there was not one feeling of her heart, not one hope, or fear, or wish, or anxiety, which she could not share with him.

For closely as all these allied themselves with the image of Keith and his affairs, Katherine felt that the confidence which linked them together was warm, and kind, and innocent enough to banish everything like hesitation in opening to him the innermost recesses of her soul. Not her father, not even Julian himself, could have awakened the sweet, wistful, and confiding sense of safety and protection which, on this and all other occasions, followed the image of Keith. There was none of that fluttering and unquiet mixture of feeling which would have belonged to such a sentiment as hers, had he who claimed it been less known, less tried, less trusted. From her childhood up to the moment when a knowledge of the truth first broke in upon her, she had been accustomed to look to Keith for support and protection with an affectionate confidence, which, without partaking of the exact nature of her tenderness either to father or brother, was as elevated and more intimate than either. Her love—all sacred and unacknowledged as it still continued—was, in the words of a French metaphysician, "l'amitié plus vive et plus tendre ;" of which the very strength and depth sufficed to render the relation in which she stood towards her unaccepted lover different in kind, yet more delicate by far than the closest ties of blood or kindred.

The mere act of longing for Keith, and the contemplation of all the blessings which must follow in the train of her confidence in him, assisted to tranquillize Katherine's mind and heart. "One so good cannot need the heavy chastenings of Heaven," thought she, as the image of his brave submission and his cheerful struggle with the ills of life rose before her. "God will care for him and bless him—the means be in his hand."

And with the hallowing and sanctifying calm of the best affections of earth and heaven upon her soul, Katherine fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Vex not his ghost!"

SHAKSPEARE.

The next morning brought Marion a letter

from her brother—a long, kind, and cheerful letter, filled with minute details of the present, and buoyant hopes of the future posture of his affairs. He described his own indignant surprise at Lord de Mar's abrupt winding up of the transaction between them; his first impulse of despondency, and its dissipation in a long visit from Julian, and a confidential, and, according to his report of it, most generous and affectionate discussion of his own prospects, by the future heir of Inverhaggernie.

"Matters are now," wrote Keith, "in exactly the same position in which they stood previous to the sale; with this valuable improvement, that I am now the debtor of Julian, not of Lord de Mar. The property, should it come to Julian before my return from abroad, will remain in pledge to him until I shall be qualified to reclaim it; and, thanks to General Stuart and his majesty's colonial minister, that hope is a less distant one than might be dreaded."

He then touched upon the period of his embarkation as if it were a subject on which he scarcely dared to trust himself, and adverted to Marion's desire of accompanying him as a caprice of the moment, which must have long since yielded to wiser and better thoughts. He sent no message to Katherine beyond a grateful acknowledgment of her kindness to his sister; but the concluding paragraph of his letter ran thus:

"There is but one circumstance in life which can very essentially affect the colour of my fate. If God grants that blessing to my prayer, the exile and privation in which the years of my youth must be expended are but a privilege, or, at most, a light yoke, which will only sweeten the rest that follows. If it be denied, then toil, and banishment, and poverty are welcome—the very hope of recovering my beloved home will be worse than valueless to me—and yet, wo is me, this very blessing is one which I could despise myself for coveting."

Marion handed her letter to Katherine when she had read it, and the contents filled her heart with peace and joy. It was a relief unspeakable to find that the same hope which shed light over her own mind was that which lent encouragement and consolation to Chisholm; and she delighted to tell herself that it could not be entirely a vision, since it had power to sway and to establish the strong mind and rational judgment which she was accustomed to look upon as all but infallible.

The letter shed light over the household. Marion seemed to have drawn health and vigour from its pages, and not only seconded the endeavours of Katherine, but seemed in some sort to consider herself called upon to support her, as the person who had, at the moment, least subject of mourning.

The sun shone to-day, too, and the air was mild and quiet, and the morning was agreeably occupied by a walk to Killurie. Miss Forbes had yet to learn the contents of both the letters that had reached the manse, and Katherine did not forget that she too was suffering in the absence of her dearest relation.

There was something in nature which seemed to typify the feelings with which the two young friends walked forth among the solitudes which surrounded them. The first month of winter had set in, and yet all who are familiar

with the lingering and desolate beauty of a Highland autumn will confess the influence of that melancholy interest with which the blending of these two seasons is invested in the land of the mountain and the flood. In the beginning of November the trees were not leafless, though their cast foliage lay in masses underfoot, and rustled to the tread of the wanderer with a whispering sound, that came like sad music over the soul, and blessed it with the luxury of pensive thought. Neither was there a taint of winter's bitterness in the air, nor a beam of his bright frost upon the sky; but there was a soft gray, stealing quietude in the clouds, and a meek serenity in the face of nature, which harmonize to admiration with the sentiments which fill the heart of her worshipper in the season of her decline, and fall in sweetly with the working of a spirit on which hang the cloud and sunshine of undetermined fate.

There was in the hearts both of Katherine and of her companion a glimmering of light and darkness—a sort of mingling of the hues of hope and fear—which welcomed the kindred influences of the earth and skies, as the hearts of those alone can do who see more in the panoply of nature than even her beauty or her laws.

They walked over the ridge of a hill skirting the small space of tableland which served the Castle of Killurie for a lawn, and which was broken into a thousand picturesque varieties of surface, and planted by the hand of Nature with her own most beautiful clothing, an underwood of oak, with here and there a beautiful and stately birch-tree rearing her graceful head, and bending low her pensile foliage over the coppice.

The strip of mountain was called Shianlarig, or the Fairies' Track, and many a bald gray stone, that rose from a patch of verdure well deserving the favour of elf and sprite, commanded a noble and sweeping prospect far beyond the confines of Glenurie. On one of these Katherine enthroned herself, and placed a cushion for Marion of her own plaid beside her on the rock.

"Five minutes are all that you need hope for," said she, "just to recover your breath, and take one peep over to Inverhaggernie."

It was a fair and lovely scene even in the season of gloom and shadow. Glenurie, with its woods and its waters, lay around them, and far beyond the loch's highest boundary the vale of Inverhaggernie gleamed forth from the mountain gorge in its beautiful and surpassing solitude. Its absolute seclusion, its narrow, winding strath, and its glittering loch, were so entirely distinct from the expanse of the intervening valley, that it looked like some exquisite painting executed by the pencil of a Titian, and framed in rocks and mountains.

Katherine fed her eyes and her spirit upon the beauty of Nature till her heart swelled with its own fulness, and her gaze, as she turned it upon the pale, wistful countenance of Marion, was dimmed with tears of enthusiasm.

"How lovely it is!" said she, in a voice full of happiness and hope. "How like the very home of what is good and noble! Dearest Marion, I think it would be an act of infidelity to Heaven were we to doubt that it would again be his."

Marion smiled, but there was no flush of fer-

vent and trusting confidence on her cheek as she replied,

"I believe that it will again be his, if it is God's will to prosper the means used to reclaim it: but when?"

And her eyelids dropped over the scene she was contemplating, as if the period she would have named conveyed some idea in opposition to the previous part of the sentence.

"When?" repeated Katherine, gently. "When Keith shall have fulfilled his years of servitude—when the wisdom of Omnipotence shall have effected the purpose for which he sends the trials of these days. And then, dearest Marion, we shall be able to look back upon the long years that so appal us now, with no other feeling than satisfaction, and very probably trace out the wise and merciful design for which they were imposed."

"Yes," said Marion, "or, more probably still, we shall find that the years of exile and separation were necessary to loosen the band that bound us too closely to life in the enjoyment of these blessings."

"No," said Katherine, in a grave tone, "that cannot be, since the heart that is capable of loving objects such as these—as they ought to be loved—as they are loved, dear Marion—is *not* capable in any wise of the worldliness of over-estimating them."

Marion smiled, and laid her hand caressingly upon Katherine's neck, as if she would have thanked her for appreciating her brother's virtues.

After a few moments of silence, she pointed to a little knoll just discernible at the entrance of the vale, with a clump of black firs upon its rise, and the ruins of a small chapel, now and then revealed by a sunbeam among their branches.

"There," said she, in a tone of perfect tranquillity and contentment, "there is the only spot to which I shall ever return; and even thither it will only be my bones that come, since my spirit, all of it that belongs to earth, shall be here forever."

"I know better," answered Katherine, with a quiet nod; "and without the smallest fear of disturbing your tranquillity of mind, I venture to predict that you will tread many a day over the turf of Saint Feolan's before you lie down beneath it. I know both your mental and physical capacities better than you do yourself, and I am certain that both have still many calls to answer."

It was thus that Katherine strove to combat the morbid and desponding feelings of her friend, and found her own spirit strengthened and purified in the attempt. She could perceive that it was more the seeking of a feeble nature for the support of others—the clinging of a weak sensibility to the stronger and healthier views of other minds, which led Marion thus to court the contradiction of her own sentiments, than any desire or expectation of effecting Katherine's conversion to them; and she endeavoured by every means to show her that such sentiments stood rather in the light of sickly and unnatural fancies, the result of bodily weakness, than of real errors, which demanded the force of argument or remonstrance to root them out.

Such arguments and such walks produced

their effects, and Katherine could see that the regularity and cheerfulness of her residence at the manse did more for the invalid than all the recipes and regimens that could be prescribed for her.

Mr. Randolph's first letter was watched for, as might be expected, with much eagerness and anxiety, and it came before there had been time for impatience anywhere. It was dated only the day after his arrival in Edinburgh, and contained the intelligence of the old man's death, which had occurred but a few hours subsequently to his arrival in town. He had barely the satisfaction of seeing him alive, as Mr. Fletcher had expired without recovering the use of his faculties for one moment; and Julian, should he set out upon his journey on the immediate receipt of his father's summons, would scarcely be in time for the funeral.

Mr. Randolph declared that, as soon as the arrangements should be completed and the will read, he would return home; and, since everything must be over in a few days, he considered it unnecessary to write again before his departure. He could give no account of Julian, but advised the group not to depend upon the pleasure of seeing him, since his leave was not likely to extend long, after so short a period of service.

Katherine read this letter with little accession of feeling. The first pang which her uncle's death occasioned was already over, in the first news of its certainty; and a solemn sense of the shadowy tenure of human life was all which the second communication awakened. Mr. Fletcher was a man of stern principles and unblemished reputation; and she loved now to recall the one great act of kindness to herself, and occasional instances of deferential respect towards her father, which argued well for his less visible qualities of heart and judgment.

Katherine was as far removed from the generalizing philanthropy whereby enthusiasts decide the fate of all the species according to their own ardent hopes, as from the gloomy presumption of the bigot, who dares to pass sentence upon the creatures of Him who has said, "I will be your Judge." And yet she rested upon the sure and certain hope of the old man's blessed transference from the "rake of this tough world" to the joys and glories of a better; and the tears which she shed to the memory of one whom she had tried to initiate into the amenities of life, were sweetened by the reflection that he was now where alone such lessons are perfected.

Katherine was the only being who wept for the rich man's death. Mrs. Randolph wondered more and more—she wondered if the will would fix Julian's majority—she wondered what was the exact amount of her son's wealth—she wondered if Julian would purchase a company immediately, or if he would not rather leave the army altogether, and assume the country gentleman—she wondered when everything would be settled—and more and most of all, she wondered for what reason Mr. Randolph kept them in suspense till the news should be delivered in person, since a letter would have conveyed it at least two days sooner.

Marion said nothing—made not one remark upon the discursive speculations of her hostess; but there was a gleam in her eyes, and an occa-

sional curvature on her brow, that proved she was not without her own anxieties

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown,
When thou gavest thy golden one away."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE week drew slowly to a close, though the peculiar anxieties of the little party at the manse seemed to weigh upon the pinion of time with a leaden shackle. Despite of all Katherine's efforts and Marion's meek composure, the minds of both suffered that ungovernable disturbance and excitement which a strong and new feeling of expectation, be its object good or evil, never fails to produce; and each day, as it dawned, brought with it a host of conjectures upon the pro and con of Mr. Randolph's arrival.

The week passed, however, without sight or tidings of him, and by the morning of the eighth day the general anxiety had reached its zenith. There is something in the very monotony of solitude which increases this feverish restlessness of hope deferred to a degree which the members of a crowd will smile to hear recorded. But when the same peaceful round of duties and enjoyments leads us ever, from day to day, in one serene and verdant path, there is that in the threatening aspect of the sky, whether its gloom portends a thunder-storm or a dewy shower, which dissipates the spirit's calm, and works it into foam and turmoil.

It was so with Katherine; and she looked forward to her father's arrival with a vague and undefined impression that his return would affect her destiny in some immeasurable and incomprehensible degree. She did not ask herself what she anticipated; she even strove to reason away the idea from her mind entirely. But reason and instinct have no relation, and her unformed and undecided apprehensions were intuitive. Marion and she seemed, by mutual consent, to have dismissed the subject from their more intimate and confidential communings; and it was only in presence of Mrs. Randolph, or by casual remarks on the probable period of Mr. Randolph's return, that one dared to address the other on the subject of her thoughts. It was perfectly apparent, however, to both that the same reflections occupied them exclusively, and a closer bond of sympathy and fellowship arose between them in consequence.

The morning of Saturday, which completed Mr. Randolph's fortnight of absence, and also the week which he had fixed for his return, set in among blasts and storms, such as reduced the expecting group to the necessity of hoping that his journey might not be begun. The winter wind rioted over the valley in hurricanes, bearing severed branches and clouds of withered leaves upon its breath; and the torrents of rain which fell at intervals passed away only to reveal a cold blue, sullen atmosphere, which robbed the very mist-wreaths of their elasticity. The face of the waters was black and stormy, and the waves rose upon it in foaming breakers so high, that a gust of wind would catch the spray, and send it drifting like a mighty snow-wreath over the whole surface of the loch.

There is something sublime in the sort of tempest I would describe, which every Highland heart will acknowledge, and supply from its own experience, while it confesses that, frequent as such scenes are in its own glorious home, they never occur without seizing upon the imagination with the force of novelty.

Katherine and Marion threw aside their books and their work to watch the changeful face of Nature, as the mist now fell upon the earth and the waters in one unbroken sea, leaving the summit of the hills above its surface like islands in the ocean—now gathered into a dense curtain at the farthest extremity of the glen, and now broke away into fairy, feathery circles, that clasped the rugged hills in their delicate folds for a moment, and then flitted off again like spirits.

"I cannot think papa will come to-day," said Katherine. "I am sure that he will not venture up the glen in such a tempest; even if he were on the way, I think he would remain at Kinmar till the weather brighten."

And yet the mist never moved from the face of Nature, but Katherine pointed the telescope in the direction of the road, which wound far down the strath, and was visible to a distance of several miles.

The luncheon was long delayed, but Mrs. Randolph complained of being hungry, and Katherine desiring it to be served up, looked forward as her next point to his arrival in time for dinner.

The reading and working recommenced, and with an occasional sally to the window and the telescope, a few more hours were overcome. But at four o'clock the weather showed signs of improvement; the rain ceased, and the mist remained stationary on the tops of the mountains; and though the sky was dark, and the wind still growled at intervals, and the rills poured down from every crevice of the rocks like cataracts, yet it could no longer be called a storm, and Katherine's hopes began to rise accordingly.

"I cannot think, after all, that papa will remain away another Sunday," said she, "particularly since Mr. Macdonald has gone home, and there is no one to do his duty to-morrow. I know how much he dislikes leaving the people without service. I think he must come to-night still. He would have time to reach home from Kinmar to-night, if he left it only when the rain ceased."

Marion looked out dubiously, and then assented, because Katherine waited anxiously for her opinion. The cook sent three several messages for leave to bring up the dinner, and Katherine was compelled most reluctantly to submit, although acknowledging, when the daylight was fairly shut out, that it was also excluding all hope of her father's arrival before Monday.

Marion declared her own belief that he would not now make his appearance that night, and consoled Katherine by hopes of a letter in the morning; while Mrs. Randolph wondered her daughter could be so foolish as to think more on the subject, since the hour of evening had come without him: for her part, she had never expected him that day at all, even before she knew it to be a day of storm. She had awoke

in the morning with the full impression that he would not come, and she never found a morning presentiment deceive her in anything; and then she bade Katherine set herself at ease in that tone of calm decision which is precisely the least durable to an excited and anxious mind.

The leaden moments dragged themselves along, and Katherine laughed at her own pertinacity, as every noise on the gravel or in the path made her start and flush with expectation. She exerted herself, however, to save others from the effects of her abstraction, and to weaken the strength of her own anxiety. She made green tea to solace her mother and Marion, and laughed and jested at their general disappointment, even while its effects were every moment visible.

At last the evening closed; the clock struck ten, and Mrs. Randolph, according to her infallible custom, lighted her candle as the last stroke of the hour fell upon her ear.

Marion accused her friend, with a smile, of some remaining spark of hope which might lead her still to watch for her father, and begged warmly to be allowed to share her vigil. But Katherine disclaimed all such intention, and hurried her off to bed on the instant.

When they were gone, however, she opened the shutters, placed a candle in the window, and a supply of fuel in the grate. "It is not yet impossible," said she; "and, at all events, as I shall certainly not sleep for an hour or two, I may as well watch here as up-stairs."

She almost smiled at her own obstinacy; but there was a flutter at her heart, and a trepidation in her step, which told her, almost in her own despite, that the day was not over. She could not rest for a moment: if she stood by the fire, she could not hear the sound of steps upon the gravel, and if she stood by the windows, she strained her eyes till they ached with looking through the darkness.

She bethought herself, at last, that if her father came, he would be in want of nourishment after his long journey, and she got rid of half an hour by preparing the supper-tray for him. When her labours were ended it struck eleven, and for the hundredth time she pushed aside the blind, and, warding off the candlelight with both hands from her eyes, gazed out upon the starless night with a hope which waxed fainter and fainter.

As she strove to fix her eye upon a turn of the road to which the gleaming of the loch directed her, something moved beneath the window; the gravel creaked and crisped with wheels and horses' feet, and a black object, which the darkness scarcely suffered her to distinguish as a postchaise, drew up to the door.

In an instant she had glided to the entrance, undid the fastenings, and stood in her father's arms within the porch.

"God bless my child—my own Katherine, God bless and keep you!" said the pious father, as he clasped her to the heart which warmed and yearned to receive her.

In a moment they were beside the parlour fire, and Katherine, while she caressed her father, and ministered to his wants after the cold and cheerless journey, forgot that any other interest could follow but the joy of his arrival. He swallowed a biscuit and a glass of wine, and

expressed his satisfaction that none but Katherine had been kept out of bed to receive him.

Katherine now began to discover that her father looked anxious and even careworn, and that he fixed his eye upon her with a peculiar expression of tenderness and thought. But she would not interrupt the comfort of his return with a single question, and went on pressing him to eat, as if his very absence were a thing forgotten in the joy of his arrival.

"You do not ask me about Julian," said he, at last, with a kind and yet doubtful smile; "have you no impatience to learn the amount of his inheritance?"

"Oh yes, dearest father," answered Katherine, looking up to him from her footstool, and clasping her hands upon his knee, while her crimson cheek and quick breath betrayed all that was left unsaid.

Mr. Randolph looked excited as he raised her fondly in his arms. "My beloved child," said he, in a voice that quivered with feeling, "my noble and true-hearted Katherine, you are the heir of all, and your brother is penniless!"

Katherine's arms dropped down powerless from her father's neck, and she fell back from him a few paces, as if staggered by some physical shock. Her face was white in an instant, and her voice sounded husky as she repeated, "I—I! Julian penniless! What do you mean, dear father?"

"I mean that Mr. Fletcher has bequeathed the whole amount of his property, landed and otherwise, to you, upon your coming of age—unreservedly and unconditionally to you and your heirs; with liberty to bestow the sum of five thousand pounds upon Julian, should you desire it."

Katherine burst into tears. "How cruel—how unjust—how unprincipled!" exclaimed she, when her voice was audible. "How unfeelingly poor Julian has been treated—how unworthy Uncle Fletcher has behaved!"

"Hush, hush, my dear Katherine," answered Mr. Randolph, with a grave smile; "these are not the words which such intelligence should call forth. Julian is contented, more than contented—happy in the contemplation of his sister's prosperity. Be you also thankful, my child, to Heaven for its gifts to you."

Katherine commanded her agitation after a moment, and then said, in a tone of infinite expression,

"This cannot in *reality* make any difference, except by the mortification which it inflicts on Julian; since even he could not have been master of his fortune previous to his majority, and since he will not now be deprived of it one moment longer. But the injury which Mr. Fletcher has done him cannot so easily be repaired."

"Katherine," said Mr. Randolph, firmly, "I will not listen to words like these. No impulse of generosity or affection must be allowed to hurry you into rash professions of this kind. I will not hear you speak upon the subject to-night."

"Father," replied Katherine, in a tone of reproachful and wounded feeling, "can you suppose it a *rash profession*, an impulse of generosity, which dictated my words? Dear father, do you suppose that I can require *reflection* to decide in such a matter? Oh, no, no, no! I

would rather die this moment. Not even your commands, dearest father, would induce me to retain one sixpence of the fortune that is Julian's."

She spoke in a tone of deep feeling, almost of agony, which went to his heart; and Mr. Randolph took her in his arms, and, with a smile of tenderness and encouragement, asked what she would do if she were permitted to act for herself.

"Return dear Julian his own fortune," answered she; "you have told me that when I shall be of age it is mine unconditionally, unreservedly; and I will do it, dearest father, without retaining a guinea."

"Are you aware that in one year's time you will be the heiress of three hundred thousand pounds?" said Mr. Randolph.

Katherine hesitated for a moment, and then said, with a smile and a deep blush, "Well, then, I will keep Inverhaggernie."

Mr. Randolph's eyes filled with tears as they rested on her.

"You have no power, my poor child," said he, sorrowfully. "If this could be, I should be well pleased to submit to your generous plan, dear Katherine; but listen for a moment, and I will tell you for what reason it is impossible."

Katherine lifted her eyes anxiously to his face, and he proceeded :

"The terms upon which Mr. Fletcher makes you his heiress are these: No part of the property can be alienated above the five thousand pounds mentioned in his will. It is the express command of the testator that this enormous fortune be preserved entire, and no inroad of any kind made in it that will impoverish the legatee. The old man's whim has evidently been that of becoming the founder of a family; and probably foreseeing this extravagant project of yours, he has taken this mode of preventing it, by forbidding any division of the property whatever."

"Well," answered Katherine, calmly, "then there is only one course to be pursued; the fortune shall be preserved entire, and Keith will have to pay for his own property. I thank God, dearest father, that Inverhaggernie is preserved; and oh, I thank and bless Him that dear Julian's prosperity is secured."

"Katherine," said Mr. Randolph, once more, "I tell you again that I cannot hear such words from you. I, as your father and your guardian, cannot suffer you thus to wrong yourself. Had it been possible to follow your own noble plan, and divide the wealth between you, I should have consented, and blessed God for the arrangement. As it is, I will not suffer you to repeat this proposal."

"Father, dear father, do not insult your Katherine thus," answered the gentle girl, with a fresh burst of weeping, and looking as if the best feelings of her nature were outraged by his opposition. "Do you believe that I could exist under the consciousness of supplanting Julian? Would you doom me to the never-ending torture of living in splendour, while he, our brave and free, our generous, our high-spirited Julian, was doomed to a life of labour and obscurity, and I without the power of affording him the luxuries which would be turned to gall for me? Ask your own heart, dear father, whether it

would not kill me before one year were past. Oh, do not treat me as if I were under the influence of a girlish excitement, when, in reality, it is the truest, gravest worldly sense that governs me."

She seemed exhausted with the force of her own eagerness, and Mr. Randolph soothed and reassured her with his caresses, and his declaration that what was to make her happiest was to be the course pursued.

"Go to you to bed, my love," said he, lighting her candle, "and trust all that is in the future to the guidance of Him who will never forsake such as you."

He blessed her tenderly and solemnly, and with a tearful smile she bade him good-night and ascended to her room.

A fervent prayer of thanksgiving rose this night from the lips of Katherine Randolph to that Power which had granted her petition for the welfare of her brother—which had restored her father to the house of his affection, and unto whose wisdom she desired to confide the issues of her life; and when it was spoken, she laid herself down, and slept the calm and downy sleep which cometh only to the innocent.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Let it be so—Thy truth, then, be thy dower."

SHAKSPEARE.

KATHERINE awoke next morning with a halo of most sweet peace upon her heart. It is true that her father's return had brought with it a heavy disappointment; for almost unconsciously she had anticipated that, either by the terms of her uncle's will or the exercise of Julian's affection, Inverhaggernie would have been restored, and the dreary prospect of Keith's long exile put to flight in consequence. But it was otherwise ordained. Providence had superseded both hopes in his own wise arrangement, and the pang which rose in attendance upon her own prospects was quenched in the breast of the true-hearted Katherine by the promising colours in which Julian's were arrayed.

It was a subject of unspeakable rejoicing to Katherine that all her doubts and fears, all her father's sorrowful predictions, and her mother's exulting expectations, were set at rest by the entire and unlimited confirmation of Julian's prosperity; and the single shadow which hung upon her mind in the contemplation was, that a whole year must elapse before these matters could be finally adjusted, and Julian acknowledged by the world as the heir of his uncle's thousands.

There was no petty gleam of worldly pride or triumph in the prospect of her own magnificent sacrifice. Poor Katherine turned uneasily from the contemplation of her instrumentality in the affair as the single thorn of the rose. "Had Uncle Fletcher only followed the dictates of justice and consistency," thought she, "we should have both been spared a world of inconvenience."

Still her burden of gratitude to Heaven was sweet, and she lifted up her soul in fervent thanksgiving for the welfare of him so loved and cherished; and if a solitary tear dimmed her

eye and paled her cheek as she thought of the fate of one less favoured, she chased away the intrusive sorrow on the instant, and trusted in Heaven, and was at peace.

A bitter trial awaited her at the breakfast-table, for one glance at her mother's face was sufficient to assure her, not only that the true state of affairs was known, but that nothing could be less pleasing to her than their position. Poor Katherine bore with her usual patient cheerfulness the peevish and ill-humoured tones in which every syllable her mother addressed to her was conveyed; and for her father's sake, and in pity and gratitude for the bland, sad brow and moistened eye with which he regarded her, she strove to the uttermost to banish from her manner all apparent consciousness that her mother's humour was called forth by her involuntary supplanting of Julian.

And yet, heavy as it was to a heart so gentle and dutiful, even that was not the bitterest trial which was this day in store for her. She knew that the hopes which Marion had built upon the issues of Uncle Fletcher's death were as sanguine and as precious as her own, and her heart died within her at the prospect of a task so cruel as that of extinguishing them forever. There seemed something very terrible in being obliged to confess to Marion that the opportunity of blessing Keith, and saving them both from the destiny that menaced them, had been within her reach and was rejected. She feared that Marion might look upon her sacrifice through a different medium from her own; and she was harrowed by the dread that her motives might be misconstrued by those without whose esteem and approval life would be of no value.

When the service was over, and the friends had taken their accustomed stroll over the breezy heights of Shian Larig, Katherine made her confession. She had no power to choose between modes and phrases; her voice shook, and her breath came thick and hastily as she began to speak; but there was a mild radiance of self-devotion in her eye, and a cadence of sorrowful resignation in her tone, which could not fail to carry their full impression to the mind of the listener.

Katherine watched anxiously the effect of her disclosure upon her friend, and its evidences were precisely what might have been expected. Marion turned her face aside till she had finished, and then looked round again with a pale cheek, and a cold, sad smile, and answered as if disappointment itself had exhausted its bitterness on her.

"God's will be done, dear Katherine. He will no doubt bless the end for which these heavy trials are sent to us. You are right and just not to oppose the welfare of my poor Keith to your brother's interests."

Katherine wept in the bitterness of her heart over Marion's disappointment. It seemed to teach her that the path even of virtue and heroism could not be trodden on earth save under a cold sky and a biting atmosphere; and all the pure and lofty consolation of self-approval was necessary to draw its sting from the consciousness that, in securing the happiness of one beloved object, she had sacrificed that which was scarcely less dear to her.

"Oh, dearest father," said she, in an agony of

tears, as she sought him in the study on her return, "will Keith also misconstrue my motives into a disregard of his welfare?"

And all the efforts of her father were insufficient to relieve the anxiety and pain of this apprehension. The nobleness of Keith, and her own absolute reliance upon his sympathy, and his knowledge of herself—his keen sense of honour and justice, and the confidence which had bound them together from her infancy, were all recalled, and lingered over in vain. The phantom remained to harass and perplex her.

One day, however, shortly after Marion had departed, pale, and hopeless, and broken-spirited, from the manse, Keith himself appeared, to change by his presence the whole aspect of Katherine's fate. Her heart throbbed with the contest of hope and fear, of confidence and apprehension, as she greeted him; and her first eager words, as she left both hands in his grasp, and fixed her large and speaking eyes upon his face, were,

"Have you been at home? Do you know all that has happened?"

"I have been at home; I know all that has happened, sweet Katherine," answered Keith, with a smile that sent all the clouds from her spirit at once, and made it spring towards him like a bird that has been fettered; "I know that my friend has been made a rich heiress, and has chosen to fling aside the distinction rather than defraud the brother whom she loved. But why are you so pale and anxious, dearest Katherine? Something is amiss with you; for I know the truest of human hearts better than to suppose that it already sinks under the weight of its sacrifice, costly though it may be. What ails you?" And he drew her to the light with the same gentle and affectionate familiarity he was accustomed to use towards his sister.

"Nothing now," answered Katherine, with a quivering voice; "but I was afraid that *you* might wonder at my resolution, and think that—that my sense of justice was overstrained."

Keith smiled, and the colour came joyously to his own cheek as he replied,

"I ought to be very angry at such an injurious suspicion as that, I believe; since so unfounded is it, that, had I been asked what would be the result of Mr. Fletcher's singular bequest, I should, without hesitation, have predicted what has come to pass. It would have been disappointing all my expectations of Katherine Randolph had she acted otherwise."

"God bless you, dearest Keith!" answered Katherine, and the tears swelled over her full, clear eyes as she spoke; "you know me best—you know best what makes me happy."

"And was it the fear that I should think otherwise that made you unhappy?" asked Keith, craftily.

"O yes, yes," was the reply; "this was the only apprehension I found it impossible to support, and now I have not a trial in life."

Katherine was quite unconscious of the force of her own words while speaking; but the conviction of it, a moment afterward, brought the crimson to her cheek, when the gentleman turned his own eye upon her, glittering with joy and tenderness, and for the first time drew her to his bosom.

Katherine's real sorrows were now over; for,

although the prospect of a separation from those she loved best never failed to bring its bitter pang to her heart, yet that separation was still remote, and even its darkness seemed to be enlivened by a ray of most sweet promise in the new aspect which Keith's affairs had assumed. Her position at home was not otherwise one of much comfort, for her mother still preserved her humour of peevish impatience; and, although aware of the arrangement by which Julian was to inherit his uncle's fortune at last, she could in no wise forgive or forget the original terms of Mr. Fletcher's will. She detested the notion that Julian should be dependant on his sister's generosity for the realization of his most brilliant prospects, and she fretted continually over the contretems by which the whole family was shut out from the advantages derivable from the income assigned to the heiress during the remaining year of her minority.

The sum in question was such as would have raised the simple competence of the manse into positive wealth; but Katherine resolutely refused to appropriate a shilling of it, lest in so doing she might implicate her own freedom of decision when the day of transfer should arrive.

Mr. Randolph smiled fondly over the consistent fidelity of each reply to his persuasions; but Katherine could see that her mother's ill-humour and injustice wounded him to the quick, and that he watched over her with a tender assiduity which surpassed all his former kindness, and which proved a blessed substitute for all she had lost.

There remained now but one source of pressing uneasiness to Katherine: it was her father's avowed determination not to communicate to Julian her intentions till the time for carrying them into effect should arrive. She could not bear that Julian, even for a few months, should conceive that she was satisfied with Uncle Fletcher's arrangements, and the idea of her name going forth to the world as that of the heiress of his fortune was intolerable.

All that remained to Katherine was the exercise of her own gentle influence with her father, and the hope that it might yet prove effectual to induce him to relieve Julian from the gloom of his disappointment.

A kind and cheerful letter from Brighton, which arrived shortly after, seemed by no means likely to reconcile her to her involuntary usurpation; for Julian's congratulations to the heiress, and sportive allusions to the accession of dignity brought by her new honours, only rendered her more impatient to reward his affectionate generosity.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Amor che nasce
Colla speranza
Dolce s'avanza
Ne se n'avvede
L'amante cor.
Poi pieno il trova
D'affanni e pene
Ma non gli giova
Che intorno al piede
Le sue catene
Già strinse amor.”

METASTASIO.

It is fit that we should look in for a little

while upon the unconscious subject of Katherine's cares and sacrifices, and ascertain whether to him the loss of fortune proved as severe a trial as the acquisition of it has already appeared to his sister.

Julian's gaiety, when he wrote to congratulate Katherine on the dignities to which she had arrived, was not, as may be surmised, altogether uninfluenced by the kind-hearted desire of dissipating the anxieties of his friends on the score of his own feelings. It was impossible that he could look upon the complete wreck of his own prospects with indifference; and although the naturally free and unworldly temper of his mind enabled him well to sustain the shock which a result so unlooked for could not fail to communicate, yet there were circumstances which made the heavy change in his fortunes a trial under which his fortitude wellnigh sank entirely.

From Lord de Mar, Julian felt assured that nothing which concerned him could long be kept a secret; and he often felt, even when flattered and pleased by the degree of personal interest which his lordship seemed to take in the state of his affairs, somewhat impatient of its extent and minuteness. He suspected, accordingly, that the present position of his fortunes was not likely to be hidden under a cloud; and he was the more confirmed in this suspicion, because, though neither allusion nor inquiry had ever passed between them, there was something in his lordship's manner which told him that, somehow or another, he had contrived to look behind the curtain; for, when he returned from his short leave of absence, no questions were asked, nor any congratulations offered—no mute but significant clasp of the hand was given like that which expressed the sympathy which attended his departure; and in the face of his own wishes, Julian was obliged to confess that a change, indescribable, undefinable, imperceptible to all eyes but his own, marked the manner of his reception. There was no diminution of cordiality—none; but there was a sort of careless off-handedness—a generalizing of him with all the young officers besides, and an absence of that confidential and distinguishing kindness which used to mix up a something of deference in the regard that was bestowed on him.

This was the precise impression most likely to chafe Julian, and to force upon him the value of what he had lost. He watched the bearing of his brother officers with the eye of a cynic; and though, except in the underbred and ill-mannered insolence of Major Moira, he could not trace the most remote appearance of a falling away among the light-hearted group in which he had from the first been a reigning favourite, yet he felt that his own ever-present suspicion gave to his naturally generous temper an extreme degree of irritability.

Amid all the doubts and fears, however, all the jealousies and suspicions which assailed him, none acted upon heart, and mind, and feeling with the strength, with the destroying intensity of that which had reference to the Lady Ida. Julian was obliged to confess to himself that, but for her, the loss of wealth and power were to him a light evil. He loved his noble profession, and he delighted in the prospect of winning name and fame, and a competence, in

the career which it opened up to him. But oh! how the sky changed! how the picture was reversed, when he contemplated the hour which might give the idol of his boyhood to one from whom the fickle light of fortune had never turned, as it had done from him, to leave him desolate! How his spirit writhed under the idea that he was no longer a fitting suitor for the wealthy and highborn Ida! How his blood chilled with the suspicion that Lord de Mar himself would press the conviction upon him, and how every nerve of his mind strained itself in the eager scrutiny with which he strove to read the secret soul of the fair girl herself! How he reasoned on her kindness—how he analyzed her smiles—how he watched, and weighed, and scanned each trivial word, or look, or motion, by which it might be possible to compare her bearing to himself with her manner to others of higher hopes and lowlier deservings.

Julian had reasoned and speculated—first doubting, and then hating himself for the unworthiness of his own suspicions—now glorying and joying in the truth and gentleness of his beautiful idol, and anon smiling and sneering in bitter mockery of his own presumptuous hopes, until he had rendered himself unfit to reason on the subject—incapable of drawing a correct inference or a just conclusion; so completely was he blinded and led away by the bias of his wild and passionate fears.

It was in this bitter humour, to which his fate had led him, that he found himself, for the first time after many days, proceeding to pay a visit to the Lady Ida. His temper had been chafed in an unusual degree that morning by a circumstance which was in itself scarcely of sufficient importance to have wrought such evil. His much-cherished horse Redgauntlet, a gift from his good friend General Forbes, was a beautiful creature, admired, and petted, and envied, as he deserved to be, by the whole corps, and this morning Julian had stopped the groom as he led him out to water, and stood a few moments to caress and speak to his favourite as it passed. While he was so occupied, a young officer hastened up to him, and asked eagerly if he meant to sell him.

"Sell him!" repeated Julian, indignantly; "no, truly. Have I not told you a hundred times that I would not give Redgauntlet for his weight in gold."

"Well, I thought so," answered the youth, good-humouredly; "only Lord de Mar was saying yesterday that he thought it not unlikely you might part with him."

He passed on, and left Julian breathless with irritation and dismay. "So," thought he, "I am considered a beggar, am I? and my poverty is doubtless made a subject of speculation to the garrison. No, no, Redgauntlet," added he, addressing the animal with that morbid bitterness with which an unregulated imagination gives importance to trifles. "No, no, I can still afford sustenance to myself and you; and while that power remains, you shall not be made merchandise of."

The effects produced by this little trial of temper had not worn off, when Julian found himself on his way to the presence of the Lady Ida. It may be questioned what novel influence drew him in that dark hour to a presence

wherein of all others he would have desired to shine; and, had the same inquiry arisen in his own breast, it would have probably been met by the confession, that in that presence alone did he ever seek the happiness which none other had the power to offer.

Julian's long-established intimacy in the family of the colonel made him a privileged intruder at all hours; and it was a sort of balm to his wounded pride to find himself shown, as usual, to the room set apart to the Lady Ida's mornings, and unconnected with the suite of the drawing-room. The terms on which he was accustomed to frequent the house enabled him to enter unannounced; and he despatched the man who attended him, and opened the door for himself.

It was a fairy chamber, that little boudoir, and every item of its contents was in some degree indicative of the innocent and somewhat elevated cast of mind pertaining to its occupant. There were books, and work, and music lying everywhere in the sort of litter which is more redolent of comfort and elegance than the simplicity of order itself. Every article of furniture was of the most costly and exquisite description; but those who would take the trouble of examining the pictures on the walls—the small groups of statuary that were placed in every situation most effective—the titles of the gilded and velvet-bound books that filled every available corner—and even the subjects of the music that loaded the stands, might discover that a loftier principle than the love of splendour had guided their selection.

The Lady Ida was seated near the fire by a small table, with both arms resting on it, and her head drooping down over a book which seemed to engage her attention. The only other occupant of the room was a small and very beautiful greyhound of the Italian breed, which nestled its delicate head and folded up its dainty limbs on a cushion which, covered with gold embroidery, lay upon a sofa beside her.

It needed but one glance at the figure and attitude of the Lady Ida to discover that her humour was in no degree less pensive than that which we have just described as belonging to her visiter; and there was a poetical harmony about the fair girl at all times, which often led you to believe that the very colour of her dress, or the mode of its arrangement, might be taken as an index of the humour of the moment. This morning it was of the saddest; for she was dressed in a heavy robe of dark brown velvet, drawn in large rich folds across the bosom, and closed at the throat with an antique gem. Her fair and silken hair was gathered into a net, from which its luxuriance burst forth in many a resplendent curl upon her sad-coloured dress, the rich and somewhat cumbrous material of which seemed only to show the delicate and ethereal nature of her beauty more conspicuously; and as she rested her forehead upon both her uplifted hands, the wide sleeves fell aside, and discovered the minute symmetry of her fair white arms, with an effect which no effort of contrivance could have surpassed.

Julian entered as softly as though his feet were shod with down, and yet she heard his footsteps in an instant, and rose hurriedly, and

as if she were little disposed to welcome the intruder. She turned aside hastily before replying to his salutation, and though the movement was past like the fluttering of a leaf, Julian could have sworn that it was made for the purpose of shaking tears away.

The Lady Ida weeping! It was the first time he had ever imagined such a thing within the range of fortune's freaks. The Lady Ida de Mar—a creature born in sunshine, and reared amid flowers—the idol of all over whose path she had ever shed the halo of her presence—one for whose delicate foot the beautiful earth itself, with its dews and its roses, was too coarse a resting-place—one from whom the sunbeams stole brightness as they passed, and to look on whom might compensate for the light of day itself—she on whom nature, and fortune, and circumstance vied and struggled with each other to pour gifts and blessings—the Lady Ida weeping! His fancy could sooner have “bent the buoyant lark to melancholy service,” than have attributed to her a moment of sorrow. Tears were, somehow or other, a strange and unfamiliar image in connexion with the bright young thing before him. He had never seen her eye glisten but with joy amid her own graceful and innocent mirth. The very trifles which usually vex those of her sex and age whom they assail—a gloomy morning for a ride—a faithless milliner—an aching finger, or a broken bracelet, seemed to afford to her but so many opportunities for the display of that pretty, childish, and half-laughing petulance, which more than all other humours became her.

The Lady Ida weeping! Julian's heart sank painfully at the thought; and so thoughtful and sad was his own greeting, that he was not conscious of the cold and somewhat proud reserve of hers. He made his compliments, and she motioned with her small hand for him to sit down.

Julian scanned her face with such a gaze as never is bestowed but on the thing that is dearer to the gazer than life or light, and the scrutiny wrung his heart. She was pale—pale—and her small mouth was scarlet, as if excitement had deepened its tint; and round either of the chiselled eyelids there was a small pink rim, as if the tears had scorched them.

Julian's breast heaved with its sympathy. He would have given years of life for the privilege of falling at her feet, and offering his breast to her footstep, if thereby the thorn might be removed from her path. He would have blessed Heaven for the power of removing every pang from her heart at the cost of the drops that warmed his own; and yet he stood in her presence bound by the thrall of his fortunes, and crushing down the rising spirit within by memories of bitterness. A few short weeks ago, and in such a moment he would not have deemed it a duty to look upon her tears in silence; he would have knelt before her, and, with the breath of his passionate devotion, have swept the clouds from her spirit; but now! what exigence might authorize the penniless subaltern to tell the rich noble's daughter that her sorrow wrung his heart?

Thoughts such as these were not likely to make Julian talkative, and he was conscious that the silence hung heavily on both, till the

Lady Ida broke it with tones that seemed the very contrast to her appearance.

“I am still among the jewelled numbers of Ariosto,” said she, pointing to her book, and with a perfectly successful effort to banish all peculiarity of accent from her words. “I have just accompanied Astolfo to the moon; and certainly there is no journey of which I should so much like to reap the effect.”

“Indeed!” said Julian, with a slight smile; “whose senses would you take the trouble of seeking for?”

“Why, if one could secure the *minds* of some of one's friends in a vial glass of sufficient transparency, it might save a world of pain and disappointment,” answered the Lady Ida, in a tone which carried a sting to Julian's ear, he could not tell why.

“You are the last person to whom such a mode of reading men's minds can be of service; you would see nothing there which may not now be as easily traced,” said Julian.

The lady laughed—a bitter, little, scornful laugh—and he could see her lip quiver as she replied,

“You speak to me as if I were a child, and could believe the steadiness of human nature at your bidding. But I am not a child, and I have discovered for myself that the race of earth is either one universal falsehood, or else that the sands of the desert are not more changeable.”

“Wo is me! it is even so,” answered Julian, gloomily; and his thoughts fell back upon his own altered fortunes. “But, oh beautiful Ida, it is men's fates, and not their feelings, which are changed. Nature knows no fickleness; it is fortune; the ‘*dea fallace che sempre rota*’.”

Julian was accustomed to address her in this fanciful and familiar style, though his words never lost the deep tone of respect; but to-day it seemed, for the first time, irksome to her; and she curved her beautiful throat proudly as she replied,

“There is no nature among men; it is all art—art and counterfeit; they offer us gold like the man in the tale, and when we have hoarded it, and thought it truth, it turns to withered leaves in our very keeping. Men do not think it necessary to speak truth to a woman.”

There was something in these words, and in their mode of utterance, which wrung Julian to the soul, and he answered, with his deep, earnest eyes fixed upon her, and in tones which the very reproach they conveyed rendered musical,

“These are not the thoughts that belong to your bright and innocent youth.”

The Lady Ida laughed uneasily, and coloured a little, as if she could not bear his gaze; and when she spoke again, it was in a gayer tone than she had yet assumed.

“Youth and its hopes are like the bridge of Al Sirat; if it bear us over the gulf, it is indeed to Paradise; but”—and her voice sank and trembled—“how much oftener does it give way beneath us! and then we are plunged into the darkness, and float down the dull stream of time in solitude.”

Julian looked upon her in surprise. “Ah! do not say so,” exclaimed he, passionately. “Youth is the season of bright hopes and precious dreams, which no after-night of sorrow

can ever take away. Are not the memories of youth a joy to our manhood, a solace to our age? they are the only part of us which fate can never steal. Beautiful Ida, memory is a treasure which hope itself cannot transcend. Oh! do not blot it for me with words like these!"

The fair girl fixed her eyes upon him, and the red blood rushed over her very forehead, but it faded again as hastily, and she replied, with a cold and haughty tone,

" You are fortunate; I would be happier than I shall ever be again, if my memory were a blank."

Julian started forward to look upon her when she pronounced these words, and a smile of anguish was on his lip as he replied to them.

" You have taught me to feel that memory can sting forever," said he, in a low, passionate tone, that thrilled upon the ear like the echo of sad music. " Until this day, it was dearer to me than the present or the future."

CHAPTER XXIX.

" So young and so untender."

SHAKSPEARE.

JULIAN went forth from the presence of the Lady Ida in such a mood as the imagination might attribute to one who has fancied himself beloved by some bright angel of the skies, and, having laid his whole treasury of life at her feet, sees the creature of his idolatry flit upward to her own bright home above, leaving him blinded by the very radiance which surrounds her. There was not one taint of bitterness in the desolation of heart and life which this little interview had shed upon him. The bare idea of the young Ida treating him with injustice would have seemed a sacrilege to his pure and passionate devotion. It was all fair and natural that, when the secret of his altered destiny transpired, it should affect the relation in which they stood towards each other. There was now a distance between them which it was not in the power of fortune to surmount, and that all the world should see it but herself was not to be supposed. She did not look upon it without suffering, as the memory of her pale cheek and flushed eyelids testified; and Julian's heart yearned towards her at the thought with an agony of gratitude and devotion that seemed to drink the very fountain of life within him.

Yet this day's experience added a sad and bitter page to the record of Julian's love and his fidelity. Oh! those were terrible words, even though their sting were dipped in the honey of her own suffering. The balm which his spirit found in the thought that these cruel changes were not indifferent to her, scarcely atoned for the pang with which every sentence she had spoken was recalled: "There is no nature among men—it is all counterfeit." How poor Julian's heart—that heart which so often had been laid bare before her—sickened over the memory of these harsh words! It is true, he had often alluded to his own splendid prospects before her; he delighted in doing so, if it were but to prove that the destiny he would offer her was not quite unworthy her acceptance. But surely the fallacy of his own hopes—the caprice of another, from which he suffered so heavily himself, could

not be charged to him as art or counterfeit. She wished that her memory were a blank! the radiant joys of the past had power, then, to cast the future into shadow. What a heart-wringing solace was this to Julian! purchased as it was at the cost of happiness more precious far to him than his own! He hated himself for even the momentary softness into which he was betrayed by the conviction that these memories of hers were deathless. He would, with his own hand, have erased from her remembrance every line and trace of his own image—though the hope of fixing it there had once been the aim of his existence—if by so doing he could secure her happiness. He knew that, had the fate of each been reversed, and the noble Ida plunged to the obscurity of his position while he rose to the elevation of hers, he would have cast the babbles of wealth and rank behind him, and earned his bread from the green earth's surface for her sake—ay, and found his station prouder than that of a throned monarch from the privilege; and yet the young pure heart which this generous thought was stirring to its very depths, did not for one instant trace the contrast offered by the conduct of the beloved.

Such a notion as the star of his worship descending to the gloomy sphere of his own orbit never crossed Julian's mind, and yet the cruel words and unfamiliar tones which she had spoken before him struck into his soul with a sharp and bleeding wound. "Does she think that I have purposely misled her?" was a question which formed the climax to his misery. "Can she believe that I have stolen her favour under false pretences? that I knew or guessed from the beginning the hue of my own fortunes? No!" and the blood rushed proudly and indignantly to his forehead at a suspicion so degrading; "and yet, if not, she was harsher than need was."

New views, the results of lengthened reflections upon the incidents of the morning, served only to strike home the arrow that had entered Julian's bosom. To indulge these reflections the more freely, he had wandered on he knew not whither, and found himself, when consciousness returned, on a lonely part of the shore of Brighton. The green ocean lay before, and the barren shingles of the strand around him; the scene agreed with the bleak and desolate images within; and giving way for the first time to the oppression of his adversity, he seated himself upon a rock in the sand, and, burying his face in his hands, wept the bitterest tears of passion and despair.

Julian had not long completed his twentieth year, and, despite the ardent and sensitive temper of his heart and imagination, they were the first tears of his manhood, and composed that ominous flood which never cometh over the strong man's brain but to leave a deathless trace behind.

This day might be said to confirm the change that for some time had been perceptible in the habits and deportment of Julian. The spirit and gayety which used to render him the very favourite of the favoured were quenched. He came and went from the mess-table with scarcely the interchange of greeting with his fellow-officers; and he left Redgauntlet to be exercised by his groom, while he wandered solitary and gloomy along the shore. His pride was still equal to parrying the attacks of good-humoured railing which frequently assailed him, as a man

of sense and taste will always turn aside the glances which would pry farther than he chooses their scrutiny to extend; but it soon became sufficiently obvious that he desired no companionship; and although his moody and unsociable humour affected the hilarity of the whole mess, Julian had taught its members the danger of molesting him.

It chanced that the great mess-room was divided in the midst by a large screen, which concealed the entrance, and made the ingress and egress of its occupants a profound secret to those who stood beyond. One morning, the first time for a fortnight, Julian sauntered into the room for half an hour in the course of the forenoon; and as he stood for one instant beside a table to look into a new periodical that lay upon it, the voices of two young officers reached him from behind the screen.

"Do you know, Sullivan," said the candidate for Julian's horse, "I think I have found out what makes Randolph so glum and sulky of late? It is the major's success with the Lady Ida. They say papa has it all his own way, and that they are engaged, or nearly so."

Julian had just reached the door for the purpose of quitting his unintentional post of eavesdropper, without annoying the speakers, when this speech was concluded; and, before he had walked out of hearing, the reply of Sullivan, his own particular friend, reached his ears.

"Pooh! that must be nonsense; for, until Randolph gave up going there, Moira was the perpetual butt of her ladyship's wit, and nothing more."

Julian wandered abroad with an ice-bolt at his heart. There needed but this to fill up the measure of his desolation; and although three short months before he would have laughed such a fantasy to scorn, yet now the elasticity of his spirit was gone, and it fell before the random suggestion to which he had just accidentally listened.

Julian had lived years of life in the three weeks which had elapsed since his last visit to the Lady Ida. For the first time he had called up his passions to the bar of reason, and tried them by the laws of judgment; and while the verdict of both weighed him to the earth, and darkened his hemisphere of hope forever, the very strife of such strong principles served only to tighten the band which bound his heart to its first love. He told himself, with the steadiness of despair, that the young Ida was endeavouring to forget him; and so impressed was his mind, enslaved as it was by this first generous devotion, with the necessity of success to her happiness, and with the duty which he owed to its promotion, that he denied himself the common interchange of civilities which his situation warranted, because he believed that she was the calmer and the better pleased by his absence.

If there was in his feelings a tinge of that bitter pride which is inseparable from the disappointment of a pure and high-strung passion, it was dearly revenged upon the heart that nourished it; for, since his dark fate forbade that he should look upon his beautiful idol as others less devoted were privileged to do, he traced her footsteps by night, and watched her progress unseen by day. He could tell with whom she rode every morning as it passed, and to what house her father's carriage bore her, or who were honoured by sharing her company at home every night. He could tell at what hour the light streamed

from her chamber window at the close of the long, solitary day, and what was the length of her vigil ere it was extinguished. If she walked, he would watch her from some lonely elevation, and drink the breath of heaven in joy that was wasted to him from her forehead. He could tell when a shade of colour the less glowed upon her cheek, or when the shadow was in her eyes, or when they danced with the light of genius and hilarity, which once he had the power to awaken. He could tell the colour of the garments which she wore from day to day, and yet, during the long interval of time which separated them, they had not interchanged so much as a passing salutation.

Let those who are inclined to smile at the assertion that Julian lived years of life in this brief interval, confess that they know nothing of that war of two pure and mighty principles, of that intensity of conscience and of passion, which—alas! for human nature—survives so short a space the blooming prime of youth and innocence. Julian's warm and lofty affection was no boy's fancy, wasting itself by its own violence. It was a vital principle of a nature in which the chivalrous and the imaginative were paramount; a sentiment built upon that sympathy which makes the act of loving an impulse of fate. Ida was the sister of his spirit—in whom a long term of intimacy had sufficed to betray a similarity to himself so perfect, that their very tastes and opinions were the same—the being without whose participation in it no joy of earth could ever be sweet to him, no pursuit have power to interest him. She was the very religion of his imagination, and everything about her possessed for him a refining power, that seemed to preserve his mind and heart from every species of debasement, as if the shrine of so pure and fair a thing could have no resting-place for what was evil.

With a spirit bowed and a heart bursting with feeling, Julian walked out upon his favourite and solitary haunt along the shore. He wandered on for hours, now longing, with the free and bounding temper natural to his sex and youth, to fling all gentler bonds away, and find his happiness in the glory and the fever of his profession; and now giving up the empire of his bosom to all the sweet, sad images that thronged it. He felt ashamed of the thrall which bound him, and tried to school himself into believing that he too would succeed in banishing it.

The very sense of mortification deepened the heavy and oppressive melancholy which weighed upon him; and, as he approached the rock on which he had first bewailed the dark misery of his disappointment, he flung himself once again upon the rude couch it afforded, and fixed his eyes listlessly on the widespread ocean, that moaned and complained in its wintry and sad unrest before him. He entertained not a moment's doubt of the truth of Douglas's suggestion. His own observations had not failed to make him aware of the faithful attendance of the major upon the Lady Ida; and no feelings of surprise or incredulity were so strong as those excited by the sudden perception of his own blindness to a fact which had long forced itself on the conviction of all the world besides.

Julian did not, as heretofore, call to mind the old familiar tone of scorn or disdain which had always characterized the bearing of Ida to the major, and weigh it against the sweet intimacy with which she had ever carried herself towards

himself. The time for such considerations was past. He could now openly recall the natural desire of her father to promote an alliance with the son of Lord Inverawe, and the entire removal of himself as an obstacle in the way. The colour of his musings could take no tint of hope. The picture grew black before him, and the image of another, as the accepted suitor of the Lady Ida, was the shadow which eclipsed it.

The short winter day was already drawing to a close, and the cold, gray, cheerless twilight was casting its damp mantle over the earth and the waters. It was already dense enough to hide every object but those nearest; and in theplash and murmur of the waves upon the beach, every other sound was absorbed. Accordingly, Julian was totally unconscious of the approach of any intruder, till a couple of equestrians were within a few yards of his resting-place. A portion of the cliff protruded over him sufficiently to throw his figure into shade, and under shelter of the twilight he kept perfectly still, in hopes that his position would protect him from their observation.

His heart beat violently as through the deepening gloom he recognised them. They were Lady Ida de Mar and Major Moira. The velvet-embroidered saddle-cloth, and the small, graceful plume of the riding-hat, revealed the lady immediately; while the bulky proportions of the gentleman and of his heavily moulded steed, shadowed forth upon the dusky sky, were not to be mistaken. Alone! without so much as a servant, and at this hour of the day! Julian felt that even his privileges had never amounted to this, and a painful and heart-withering smile passed across his cheek as he acknowledged the correctness of his morning's information. He shrank involuntarily yet farther into the shadow of the cliff, and the air from their garments blew upon him as they swept past his hiding-place.

But Julian was not so permitted to escape. The little dog, which has been already introduced to the reader's acquaintance, and which, in happier days, had been a gift of Julian's, was following at the horse's heels, and sprang in an instant to his old master's concealment, and bounded and gambolled over him in delight. He caressed the graceful creature with something like a sensation of gratitude; but, ere they had been a minute together, the Lady Ida reined up her horse, and turned her head in search of the truant. The light shone full upon her face, and, sickly as were its rays, it served to make her features clearly visible. Her large, full, stag-like eyes rested upon his, and Julian's heart beat audibly with the effect of their gaze. He could have sworn that they recognised him, and answered his yearning glance with one of pride and scorn.

"Romeo! Romeo!" said the lady's musical tones, and then the pretty feminine whistle which he had taught her recalled the dog, and the party swept over the ground again gayly and hastily, and in ten minutes more Julian was seated at the mess-table in full dress, and with a deep flush upon his cheek, and a wild and careless sparkle in his eye, which his young brothers in arms welcomed with looks of gratulation and delight.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Action is transitory—a step—a blow—
The motion of a muscle this way or that;
'Tis done, and in the after vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed."

WORDSWORTH.

In rivalry like that which subsisted between Julian and his superior officer, the rancorous enmity with which the latter repaid the success of the former was exactly what might have been expected from a mind in which the sense of failure struggled against personal vanity of the most unlimited description.

So long as Julian's star was in the ascendant, he had very little difficulty in warding off or submitting to the innumerable petty tyrannies which Major Moira's position enabled him to inflict. It is an easy matter to disregard annoyances which have their origin in the acknowledgement of our own superiority; and this conviction was sufficient to furnish Julian with any extent of forbearance for which the major might be disposed to draw upon him. But when the scale was turned, and the triumph of success transferred to that side on which the mortification of defeat was wont to fall, it became apparent that he who knew not how to support the one with dignity, was quite incapable of acting with firmness under the intoxication produced by the other.

Julian, had he been less absorbed in the contemplation of his own sorrow, would scarcely have remained blind to the contemptible taunts and annoyances by which the major strove to mark his sense of superiority, and which were obvious to every eye but that for which they were intended. Julian's one great source of suffering, however, swallowed up every minor consideration; and he was either unconscious of the pains bestowed on the endeavour to provoke and mortify him, or passed them by without the effort of opposition.

But this evening had turned a new page for him in the volume of experience, and he had read words thereon which made him watch Major Moira's deportment towards himself with the eye of a lynx, even while, by the vivacity of his own manner, he appeared insensible to everything but the lightest amusement of the moment.

Whether Major Moira suspected the real source of Julian's unusual hilarity, and coveted the petty triumph of displaying his own acquaintance with it; or whether he desired to quell its exuberance by a repetition of former impertinence; or whether, intoxicated by his own felicity, he had become totally regardless of everything but the display of it, is uncertain; but it was very soon apparent to all that he was bent upon attracting that notice from Julian which the latter seemed equally determined to withhold.

After numerous unsuccessful attempts to arrest the attention of his rival, Major Moira addressed him from the head of the table.

"Why, Randolph," said he, "one feels disposed to congratulate you to-day on your unusual spirits; one would imagine that you were the favourite of love and fortune, rather than the rejected votary of both."

Julian had sent away his plate and half emptied his bottle of wine, and was making mirth with a loud laugh and a ready jest to a little knot of officers in his vicinity. He turned round, smiling, and, while others held their breath with

indignation at the insolence of the address, he answered with the most graceful *insouciance*,

"Yes, love and fortune have so entirely overlooked me, that I should believe in their blindness, were not Major Moira the *enfant gâté* of both."

"Come, then," pursued the major, "prove that you bear no malice by pledging me a bumper to the bright eyes and auburn tresses of the Lady Ida de Mar; and may she never have cause to rue her favours!"

Julian was wild already with fever of heart and brain, and his eye sent a flash of burning scorn upon the heartless and brutal speaker; but he filled his glass, and raised it to his lips with a glittering smile, and a hand that even the fire which glowed in it could not render unsteady.

"Auburn tresses," repeated young Douglass, with his usual blundering simplicity; "surely, you ought to be better acquainted with the lady's style of beauty, major. In *my* eyes they wear the palest colour of the sun; what say you, Randolph?"

"That the major's authority is incontrovertible," answered Julian, with the gayety of his former bearing enhanced by the excitement of the moment; "auburn must be the colour, of course."

"Well, I persist in saying golden," replied Douglass, "and I ought to know less about it than either of you. Suppose we put it to the vote?"

And he began to question the circle individually on the subject under discussion.

"Nay, nay," said the major, with a conceited simper, "if it is to be a matter so keenly contested, I had better use my privilege to settle it at once. I think I can furnish demonstration of the fact."

And the next moment Major Moira had laid his pocket-book on the table, and drawn from one of its inner folds a small packet of silver paper, which he deliberately unwrapped.

Julian watched his motions with a sense of suffocation, as if each moment as it came were to overwhelm him. One glance of his eye put Major Moira in possession of his victim's agony, and he lingered over his employment, as if to enjoy it to the uttermost. At last the inner folding was removed, and a long tress of golden effulgence swept downward from the profaning fingers that held it, till half its length was flowing upon the table.

The hottest ray ever shot from the sun through a tropical sky has no such blasting influence as that soft bright curl sent over the soul of Julian. He felt as if, with one stroke of his arm, he could have levelled the author of the sacrilege with the dust forever; and it was only the strong clasp of Sullivan's hand, and his low, deep whisper of caution in his ear, that kept him from springing forward on the maddening impulse of the moment.

The lock of hair made the round of the table, and Julian saw that beautiful thing, which he would have gone on his bended knees to kiss, outraged by the touch and the gaze of every indifferent spectator.

But his endurance was not yet taxed to the uttermost. Major Moira seemed too well satisfied with the success of his experiment to leave any means of improving it un essayed.

"If you have any doubt about its being genuine," said he, addressing Douglass, "hand it to

Mr. Randolph; I dare say his memory is not so short but it will serve him to decide."

Julian commanded himself with a mighty effort to reply.

"If you ask for my opinion, sir, I tell you that the lock of hair is not what you describe it; and if you desire my reason for saying so, I answer that it could never have been bestowed on one who is capable of turning it to such a purpose."

The major smiled ironically, and once more drew out his pocket-book.

"Nay, then," said he, "since you are so sceptical upon the subject, Mr. Randolph, you must be furnished with a test still more unerring. The matter can only be settled by comparing the disputed lock with the fair head from which it was taken."

In another moment the major had produced a second envelope of silver paper, and Julian's eyes became dim as a very beautiful enamelled miniature of the Lady Ida herself was triumphantly exhibited before them.

A tumult of congratulation and curiosity went round the table; and while the sickness of death seemed to quell even the throb of anger which the major's base disregard to all considerations of delicacy and respect awoke within the heart of Julian, he heard words of playful envy and railly addressed from every quarter to his favoured rival.

Julian's self-command now deserted him wholly, and once more the watchful friendship of Sullivan prevented him from committing some unwarrantable excess. The major, however, had not satisfied his revenge.

"Pass it on to Randolph," said he, twice over, to the cluster of youths who were eagerly studying the fair and delicate lineaments of Julian's lost love. "Hand it to Randolph; his decision has yet to be given, and I am impatient for it."

Julian refused to hold out his hand for the picture, and eyed it in its progress round the table with an expression of fierce and sullen curiosity. Sullivan grasped it as it approached, and when he held it secure in the hands of his friend, Julian could afford to bend in his turn over the faithless countenance which he had worshipped with so true and sacred an idolatry.

As his eye fell on the miniature, a violent start of surprise attracted the attention of Sullivan to his face. All the look of angry excitement had passed away, and a gleam of such glad recognition, such blessed release from an apprehension worse than death, had arisen in its place, that Julian seemed no longer the same. Nor was he. He knew the miniature instantaneously. It was a small medallion which Miss Forbes had obtained, and wore as a bracelet clasp too frequently for a friend so intimate as Julian to entertain one moment's doubt of its identity. It represented the beautiful Ida in the days in which she had appeared at Eelhaskine, in a graceful, bounding attitude, like a wood-nymph, and with the very sprigs of heather in her hair which Julian had gathered for her from the rocks. He knew every line and touch upon the lifeless ivory; he had studied it so often, that Miss Forbes used, with her animated railly, to pray for Pygmalion's success to his adoration.

The sense of relief which the discovery brought to Julian seemed so exquisite, that for a moment he forgot everything; the presence of those about him—the impertinence and disrespect of Major Moira—everything but the sweet and tender

images which the innocent countenance before him had awakened.

Julian was roused by the arrogant tones in which the major was talking at the farther end of the table.

"The attitude, I flatter myself, is peculiarly well chosen—those agile and fairy proportions are so exquisitely displayed in it. I give myself some credit for the attitude."

"May I ask the name of the artist?" said Julian, with a wonderful accession of respect and meekness in his tone.

"Why—hum—let me see;" and the major unblushingly named one of the eminent artists of the day, who, as Julian well knew, had never even seen the picture. He was resolved that his opportunity of triumphing should not be lost.

"It resembles so accurately a miniature of the Lady Ida de Mar which I saw painted in Scotland, that I imagine it to be a copy," said he in a careless tone.

"A copy!" repeated Major Moira; "Mr. —— would be very unlikely to copy from the work of a provincial artist. Your Scotch acquaintance is the copy from this."

"Indeed!" was the reply; "then the setting must also have been very closely imitated, as it was the exact counterpart of this, which is the more surprising, as I sketched the device for the gold border myself."

"Very possibly," said the major, with a slight appearance of confusion; "this has been lately set, and I doubt not the same picture suggested the same setting to the jeweller employed on it."

"Singular coincidence!" pursued Julian, as he handed the picture up the table again. "Nay, the very enamel behind is after my own idea. Is it not curious, Sullivan? It seems like magic."

"Nothing very magical, I should think, sir, in the same setting surrounding two different pictures," said the major, waxing hot; "even should the device be an original one, it becomes the property of the jeweller when it is once confided to him, I imagine."

"Of course," answered Julian; "and I dare say he has adopted my design altogether, and made this picture open with a spring from behind also. I should not be surprised if he has even copied the initials traced on the inside of my Scotch acquaintance, and enclosed them in the very lozenge which I drew for him besides. Press your finger on that spot of burnished gold, Douglas; it is positively worth while to try."

Before the major could interfere to prevent him, Douglas had obeyed, and the picture answering immediately to the pressure, opened and displayed the initials I. D. and H. F. traced in small brilliants on the back.

"How curious!" exclaimed Julian, in a loud voice; "this is, indeed, what the sailors call a Chinese copy. How pre-eminently ludicrous that any jeweller should think it necessary to put the initials of Lady Ida de Mar's intimate friend, Miss Forbes of Killurie, upon a miniature which was Major Moira's property—is it not, Sullivan?"

A suppressed titter went round the table, at every corner of which Julian's words had been distinctly audible, and the major's mortification was turned to fury at the sound which it carried to him.

"What am I to understand by such insinuations as these, Mr. Randolph?" said he, in a tone of suppressed rage, and turning a scowl of defiance on the party around him; "I tell you,

sir, that the picture is mine. I should like to know whether your inerudulousness will lead you to deny the fact."

Julian was not staggered in his belief even by this point-blank assertion. He called to mind the prevarication by which Major Moira had appeared to claim the choice of the attitude, and replied with perfect self-possession,

"Not for the world, Major Moira; though Justice may be blind, Truth is admitted by all mankind to see through every obstruction; and I have not forgotten the axiom of the dialectician, that probabilities have no weight against demonstration. The picture, of course, is exactly what it is represented to be."

"That is not enough, sir," answered Major Moira, still farther irritated by the touch of sarcasm perceptible in Julian's tone; "I desire that you will state what your suspicions are, and recant all that they have led you to insinuate against my honour."

"I have no suspicions, Major Moira," replied Julian; "I made no insinuations; there is not a doubt upon my mind relating to the subject. All I have asserted within the last few minutes was this, that there was a miniature of Lady Ida de Mar, in the attitude of a wood-nymph, painted in Scotland last summer; that I was present during every one of these sittings; that I designed the chased work of the setting, and the purple enamel on the back; that I drew a six-sided lozenge for the initials, which were traced on the reverse side of the medallion in small brilliants, and which comprehended the names of Ida de Mar, the original of the picture, and Hester Forbes, the owner of it, and the person for whom and at whose request it was executed. There is only one more particular connected with the circumstance which could in anywise interest you or the party present, and it is this: Before I left Scotland, Miss Forbes proposed to intrust me with a commission whereby a lock of the Lady Ida de Mar's hair should be braided round the diamonds which compose the initials, and that subsequently she transferred the commission to the Lady Ida herself."

There were looks and smiles followed this recital which were far too significant to fail of producing their effect upon the discomfited object of them. The major started upon his feet, and in a voice of thunder demanded that Julian should recant every word he had uttered, or receive the chastisement due to his insolence on the spot.

"You forget yourself, Major Moira," answered Julian, with great gravity and respect in his tone; "I have uttered nothing but a plain statement of facts, such as it would be quite impossible for me to retract with any regard to truth or honesty. I am exceedingly grieved that it should have proved unpalatable to you, and quite at a loss for a reason *why* it should do so."

There was a calm superiority in Julian's looks and tone which exasperated Major Moira even more than the words themselves. The general effect produced by them, however, was too obvious to be easily overlooked, and, foaming with rage and mortification, Major Moira left his seat, and withdrew with a threat of vengeance on his lips.

It was about twelve o'clock on the night of the same day that Julian, after an evening of wearing-out application to the employment which engrossed him, sealed a bundle of letters, locked his desk upon them, and, wrapping himself in

his cloak, stole quietly from his quarters, and took the road to a distant and fashionable terrace, in which stood the mansion of Lord de Mar. He entered the shrubbery, and, passing the main entrance, drew aside under the thick covert of the trees.

The night was of that dense and pitchy complexion which leaves even the nearest object in obscurity; and Julian stood in his hiding-place as safe from all risk of detection as if he had possessed the ring of Sir Gawaine.

By-and-by the sound of carriage-wheels fell on his ear, and as it approached nearer and nearer, the chariot of the Lady Ida de Mar rolled over the gravel, and the flashing of the lamps sent Julian still farther into his covert. The steps were let down, and the youthful Ida herself stepped slowly across the pavement of the porch. She was in full dress, and there were jewels on her arms and in her hair, but she looked pale and listless, and turned her head upward and around as if to look upon the dark pure night, and to drink in the keen breeze that was in harmony with her humour.

Just as she set her foot upon the threshold, the little dog Romeo bounded forward, and leaped quite into her arms with a short, yelping cry, and a thousand antics of delight. She stood still for a moment to caress him, and Julian pressed forward to listen to her.

"*Carino, gentilissimo*," said she, in the tones in which she always addressed her pet; "*Il cangiar non sappi.*"

The door was shut, the carriage had rolled away, and Julian stood alone on the spot last occupied by the fair idol of his imagination. "I have seen her for the last time," said he; and a hot pang of agony and remorse wrung his heart.

How little could he foretell the scene which was to disprove that prophecy!

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Give me no 'counsel,
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.'"
SHAKSPEARE.

"No newspaper from Killurie this morning, Katherine?" said Mr. Randolph, at breakfast. "That is strange—Miss Forbes never forgot it before—I hope all is well at the castle."

"Perhaps the general has arrived at last," answered Katherine; "and, in the joy and bustle of his reception, the newspaper is forgotten."

"No," returned her father, "that can scarcely be, as the general is not expected before the end of the month; and even in the event of his arrival, our friend is not one to let her own happiness interfere with any arrangement, however trifling, which affects even the every-day comforts of others. I am sure there is some cause for the detention of the newspaper."

Katherine laughed at her father's grave treatment of a neglect so trivial, but promised that, when her morning's occupations were over, she should walk to the castle, and assure herself of the wellbeing of its inhabitants.

At one o'clock she set forth. It was a day of keen, bright frost, with just a little powdering of snow upon the roads and hedges, to cover, as it were, the black, iron-bound surface of the earth, and to lend to it the air of gayety which a sunny

winter's day takes from its vestal livery when it can be divested of the idea of storm. All nature laughed under the glory of the blue skies and the clear sunbeams, and the bold outline of the granite peaks of Glenurie rose into the air like a range of mimic alps.

Katherine had never felt so happy: her mind and spirits were in perfect harmony with the cheerful aspect of Nature around her, and she walked on with the springy and buoyant step of youth and happiness, while now and then a light carol broke involuntarily from her lips, making the mountain echoes musical with the hilarity of her mood. She had no cares now; all went well with her; she had been to Inverhaggernie, and seen Marion blush and laugh over her own sullessness at the manse, and heap kindness and fondness on her in expiation of her former discontent; she had succeeded, at last, in overcoming her mother's peevishness on the subject of Mr. Fletcher's will, and had almost persuaded her father into promising that, as soon as the winter was past, he should travel once more to Edinburgh, and set about the negotiation which was to effect the transfer of the fortune.

Keith's departure was postponed till the month of April, four whole months from the period of her musings! This was a long reprieve—so long that, in the buoyant humour of her spirit, Katherine believed that the whole mechanism of her fate might take a new turn by that time; that some kind providence might interfere—even if it were with the wand of a fairy—to set aside the necessity of this dreary absence entirely.

Everything promised well to Katherine. The single pang which ever rose in her heart was occasioned by a momentary remembrance of certain desponding passages which had lately overshadowed the correspondence of Julian. Her woman's nature, and her own new key to the mysteries of the heart, revealed to her that these clouds were occasioned by some gloomy influence in the tenderest region of Julian's happiness; and she delighted herself, and banished every uneasy feeling as it rose, with the reflection that it was but the shadow of his broken fortunes that hung upon him, and the gulf they seemed to place between him and the Lady Ida that made that shadow act with such blighting effect upon his spirits; and one moment's anticipation of that exquisite period when all interdict would be removed, and she allowed to proclaim him the real heir of the huge fortune of Uncle Fletcher, was sufficient to turn all the doubt or bitterness of her thoughts to joy.

Katherine entered the little morning-room at Killurie with the glow of health and happiness upon her cheek; and even Miss Forbes, accustomed as she was to her gentle cheerfulness, seemed struck with the unusual sweetness of expression which dwelt upon her face.

"How well and happy you look, child! One would imagine you had some good news to tell me."

"No," answered Katherine, laughing; "I am only rejoiced, I believe, to find I have no bad news to hear; for dear papa seemed so occupied with the singular occurrence of having no newspaper this morning, that it is at his request I am here, to carry intelligence to him that you are alive and well, notwithstanding the neglect."

A grave look of uneasiness rose to Miss Forbes's face as Katherine finished her speech, and she did not immediately reply.

"I trust *you* have no bad news this morning, my kind friend," said Katherine, in an earnest tone. "I feel as if you were less gay than you ought to be this bright day: nothing is amiss, I hope?"

"Why, I have been a little ruffled by a foolish paragraph in the Gazette to-day, I must confess," answered Miss Forbes, gravely, drawing her chair closer to Katherine's; "and, to own the truth—thank Heaven, one always *can* speak the truth to you, Katherine—it was for this reason, and none other, that the newspaper has been detained; I was unwilling that it should come upon any of you with such a shock as I myself received; and I meant to have driven to the manse myself, had you not arrived here this morning."

Katherine looked aghast. "What do you mean, dear Miss Forbes? Nothing about Julian, God grant! Do not keep me a moment in suspense—you know I am always composed—tell me instantly, I entreat of you."

"Well, well, my dear child, be composed," said Miss Forbes, in a soothing tone; "the paragraph will speak for itself; and perhaps my folly is only misleading you, after all, and you may be able to strike out an entirely new light from it."

She placed the newspaper in Katherine's hand, and pointed out the ominous paragraph in silence; and Katherine, with some difficulty, so far commanded her agitation as to decipher it.

"At five o'clock on Wednesday morning, an affair of honour took place near the Devil's Dike, Brighton, between Major M—ra of the —th regiment of foot, and J—l—n R—d—ph, Esq., ensign of the same distinguished corps. Several shots were exchanged on both sides, the latter of which took effect under the right shoulder of the gallant major. His adversary left the ground unhurt. We understand the surgeons have not yet pronounced upon the extent of the injury sustained by Major M—ra, but a lively sensation has been excited by the circumstance in the higher circles of Brighton, and much interest awakened among the friends of both parties. Should the affair terminate fatally, it is expected that no trouble will be spared in bringing the survivor to justice. The young gentleman has, for the present, escaped to the Continent."

Katherine did not swoon as the cruel paper, which carried to her kind heart the sharpest wound it was capable of receiving, fell from her nerveless hands upon the floor. She did not even weep, nor utter one word which could lead her end to judge of the extent of suffering it had caused; she bowed her head upon her clasped hands for a few moments in an attitude of despair, and the long-drawn breath that shook her whole frame proved at last how terrible the blow had been to her.

When she looked up again, years of life could not work a heavier change than was visible upon her face. Its brilliant and glowing colour—its sparkle of innocent gayety—where were they? She seemed bowed with the long-continued sickness of the heart—the dark trace of agony was on her forehead and her lip; they seemed contracted with the sudden grip of suffering. Her meek serenity—that quiet and cheerful acquiescence in all the ordinary ills of life which usually distinguished her, was gone. This was a trial before which her fortitude fell with the weakness of a child. And yet she lifted up her eyes, glazed

with their misery, to Heaven, and breathed, "Thy will be done!" before she stooped for the fatal paper, and moved towards the door.

"Where are you going, Katherine? Do not leave me, my poor child, in this broken-hearted mood," said Miss Forbes, in a quivering tone. "What do you mean to do with the newspaper?"

"Take it to my father—he will know best," answered Katherine, in a husky voice, and as if the words cost her a painful effort to articulate.

"Sit down, dearest Katherine, and let us talk about it," said Miss Forbes, drawing her gently towards her seat by the fire. "You know what will be the wisest plan, my poor child; but, if you will take my advice, Katherine, you will not show these lines to your father yet a while. I can hardly justify myself in raising hopes that this terrible news may prove untrue; but you know, as well as I do, dear Katherine, the exaggerated details of everything that makes its way to us through the newspapers. Let us hope that there may yet be many extenuating circumstances to learn; and, at all events, Julian cannot have left the country without sending letters to acquaint you with his flight. These must reach you by the next post—wait till they come, my love—he will tell his own tale better than we can tell it for him. Let poor Julian have all the advantage we can give him; it will be little enough to weaken such a shock as this will be to Mr. Randolph."

Katherine gave one dry, tearless, convulsive sob, and then said, in the same voice of suffering, "I could almost hope that it might break his heart."

"My dear child, do not talk so—do not think or feel in this terrible way. I trust that God, in his infinite mercy, may yet restore Major Moira to life and health," pursued Miss Forbes; "and if it be so ordered, Julian may be a better and a wiser man through all the years of his future life from the sharp lesson of his youth. Have you forgotten the way to hope, Katherine?"

"And the punishment?" said Katherine, with a fresh gasp of horror.

"I cannot tell you—I cannot enlighten you upon this, dearest Katherine; but doubt not that our ignorance and our fears magnify the danger tenfold. Leave Julian in the hands of Him who will not see 'the seed of the righteous forsaken,' and bend all your anxieties for the present towards your father. Will this news utterly unman him, Katherine?"

A look of speechless agony was all the rejoinder.

"Well, dear love, do not tell him, at least, till the duties of to-morrow shall be performed in peace. Can you restrain the evidence of your distress so long?"

"Anything, oh, anything for Julian and my father!" answered Katherine, with a long moan of wretchedness that entered the heart of the listener.

"Try your best, then, dearest Katherine," said she, in a faltering voice. "'Tis most unhappy that my father is away, but I believe it to be just possible that he may have reached Edinburgh by this time, since he meant to spend the next three weeks in a visit to some friends in Mid-Lothian. I have written him all these particulars this morning already, and, if the letter find him in Edinburgh, he may be with us to-morrow. This is not a matter in which your father can exert himself much, dearest Katherine."

ine, without the general's assistance, and I would fain spare him the pain of remaining inactive in such an emergency. Let us be calm—let us hope the best, my dear child. Julian, at least, is beyond the reach of pursuit, and to-morrow's post will surely bring us letters from him or my father."

"I will not hide it longer than to-morrow, dear Miss Forbes," said Katherine, in a somewhat softer tone; "to-morrow will be Sunday—I will let my dear father go once more to the pulpit without this load upon his heart. But to-morrow night, whether there are letters or not, he must be told."

She rose from her seat, and once more folded up the newspaper to carry with her.

"I shall be called upon to read it aloud after dinner," said she; "I will keep from him this terrible sentence, and it will excite his wonder less if I take the paper with me."

"That is all right, then," said Miss Forbes, as she opened the door; "and the truth is my best excuse for its non-appearance in the morning: tell your father that I kept it to copy a paragraph into a letter for the general."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet, of all who mourn, none mourn like me."
BYRON.

KATHERINE retraced the steps of her morning walk in a mood which presented as wide a contrast to her early buoyancy as hope and despair are capable of affording. What cared she though the day was setting in glory over the valley, and the whole air was filled with the dusky gold of the departing sun? The heavens were veiled with the rich orange light, and the early stars gleamed through it with a blush upon each vestal gleam which the fairest hues of the summer could not rival. But Katherine hailed them not; there was no light within, and her physical orbs refused to take cognizance of the glorious dyes around her.

Oh, the first leaden gripe of sorrow! The agonized conviction that, despite our former peevish hours of self-compassion, we are looking upon the true lineaments of adversity for the very first time—the torpor of heart, and mind, and feeling, which succeeds the first moments of sharp and impotent rebellion—the dull longing to lay down our heads, and let the waves of grief roll over us—the listless, miserable repugnance to fulfil the active duties of resistance, and the passive ones of endurance and resignation!

All these bitter influences passed over poor Katherine's heart till it seemed nearly palsied with the new and strange discipline. She had no power to contemplate the evil that had befallen: her mind was incapable of reasoning at all, and she could do nothing but repeat over and over the words which comprehended her misfortune. She felt that to bear this for two whole days unsupported was more than her bodily or mental strength was capable of; and she reproached herself for the promise to Miss Forbes, which had bound her not to share her anguish with her father.

"I do not know how far I am justifiable in withholding this intelligence from him," thought

she; "surely he is the best judge of what must be done for Julian; and perhaps I am even now putting *him* in farther peril by preventing my father's exertions."

And then the sight of the good man's agony, when he should be told to look upon his child as a murderer, rose to her mind's eye, and she shuddered at the prospect of inflicting such a wound at all.

Then came the thoughts of Julian—his brave and gentle spirit crushed by a weight of remorse which time could only deepen and augment, further bowed by his father's rigorous displeasure, and the brokenness of heart which his crime was destined to shed over all the circle of those whom he loved the best.

Ah, surely there must be some softening or palliating circumstances in a deed so opposed to all the beautiful impulses of love and amity towards all men with which poor Julian's heart abounded! And would *she* be the one to set them all aside by first exposing this terrible newspaper, with all its naked, unexplained, cruel brevity? Ah! no, no! At whatever cost to herself, she would conceal her own suffering, and prevent her father's, at least, till the morrow's post had decided whether or not Julian meant that the event should reach them from himself.

The thought of Julian's anguish of remorse relieved poor Katherine by a passion of tears. Unless that friendly tide had burst forth upon the chilled and hardening misery at her heart, she felt that it would have broken; and she wept and wept, as if both heart and brain were dissolving.

It was well that her burst of weeping had done its friendly office, and she was calmed and soothed into something like an appearance of self-command before she reached the little avenue of the manse; for at its foot Mr. Randolph joined her from the path that led to the village, and with such an expression of cheerful affection on his countenance as even now presented a sorrowful contrast to the dim and lifeless humour portrayed by hers.

"Well, Miss Forbes has neither too much of happiness nor of misery, I hope, for her self-possession," said he, with a smile. "You have brought the newspaper, I perceive, not without a good reason for its non-appearance, I dare say."

"She has a thousand apologies, dear papa," answered Katherine; and she felt as if her first prevarication, pious as was the fraud, must blister her tongue in the utterance. "The paper was detained, that she might copy out something in a letter to her father. When I arrived, she was meditating a visit to the manse, to make her apologies in person. How is old Hugh to-day? I see you are from the village."

And she did her best to interest her father in a variety of inquiries relating to his round of charitable visits. Any approximation to the subject at her heart agonized her, and with infinite exertion she managed to sustain a conversation upon general topics until they had entered the house.

"Make haste, love; it is nearly half past four," said her father, as they were about to separate at the foot of the stairs. "I shall order dinner for you, and meantime give me the gazette—it will amuse me while you are taking off your bonnet."

Katherine's very heart trembled. Her father seemed inspired with a sudden passion for news, and she felt with what fatal tidings it was about

to be satisfied. She was determined, however, to run all risks rather than excite his suspicions, and she extended her hand with the newspaper.

"I was in hopes you would look over little Ivan's copybook," said she, "and leave the newspaper for me to read to you after dinner."

"Very well," was the reply; and Katherine flew to perform her hurried toilet in an agony of haste, to possess herself once more of the instrument of torture which she had left in her father's hands. At one moment she almost wished that he might discover the news for himself, and that she might be thus spared the misery of revealing it, and in the next she turned sick at heart with contemplating the possibility of such a shock coming hastily upon him.

Long before the dinner-bell rang Katherine was once more at his side, trembling with the discovery that Ivan's book had been already examined, and the newspaper resorted to! She studied the outer page as closely as her agitation would permit, and was enabled to breathe freely when she recognised the fatal paragraph in its columns. She would not leave his side for an instant, lest the newspaper should be taken up in her absence; and even when her mother's door opened above stairs, she withstood the impulse of meeting her, as usual, with the support of her arm to the dining-room.

At last the party were seated at table, and Katherine's heart-sick anxiety at an end for the present.

"Are you well, my love?" asked Mr. Randolph, as Katherine's face, divested of her bonnet, and placed directly opposite the light, attracted his regards to the extreme pallor which it exhibited.

"No, papa, not quite," answered she, with a vain endeavour to restrain the still ready tears which rose in her heavy eyes; "I have had a painful headache since my walk to Killurie—the effect of cold, perhaps."

"You will persist in getting up so early," said Mrs. Randolph, crossly. "How can people expect to escape headaches who rise before daylight in such weather as this?"

Mr. Randolph's anxious inquiries were stopped by the tone of his wife's sympathy, and Katherine recovered herself in shorter space than would have sufficed, had the influence of her father's tenderness continued to weaken her.

Dinner came at length to an end; and the party gathering snugly round the bright December fire, Katherine, of her own accord, resumed the huckleberry gazette, and seated herself beside the candles to read aloud.

"Leave it to me, dear Katherine," said her father; "reading by candlelight will not improve your headache—leave it to me;" and he laid his hand peremptorily upon it.

"Oh no, no, dear father, it amuses me indeed," answered she, with so much more earnestness than the occasion seemed to require, that her father submitted almost involuntarily.

Column after column was read aloud, in the usual clear, soft tones which made the act of listening to her a luxury, and which were not impaired this night by one tone of dissonance; and yet, when the task was ended, had the subject of it been discussed, Katherine would have been forced to declare herself ignorant of the literal meaning of every sentence she had uttered; yet it was impossible to doubt that her whole attention was given to the newspaper, from the skill

with which she arranged its folds, so as to render one particular page invisible to others.

Saturday night was one which, on ordinary occasions, Mr. Randolph never gave to the solitary duties of the study. He loved, in the contemplation of a day of holy rest, to preface it with a few hours of cheerful domestic intercourse; and, accordingly, the enjoyment of Sunday usually commenced with Katherine in the delightful hours of the previous evening, which her father was so well pleased to devote to her.

On this eventful night she would have given more than she possessed had any professional call drawn her dear father from the circle of which he had always been to her the light and blessing. It was an effort which her exhausted strength could scarcely compass, to sustain throughout the evening her accustomed air of cheerful tranquillity; and yet, when her father's anxious look followed a short pause in her conversation, or watched a momentary spasm of mental anguish which might be visible in her countenance, she felt as if a fresh incentive were furnished to the assumption of cheerfulness which was not ease.

At eight o'clock it was Katherine's custom to receive visits from all her pensioners who might have need of her assistance for the comfort of the ensuing Sunday; and a slice of cold meat, a basket of potatoes, or even a scuttle of coals, was distributed under her superintendence, according to the various wants of the petitioners. This evening she started up as the clock struck eight, with a sensation of relief in the prospect of active employment, and descended to the clean, cheerful-looking kitchen of the manse to receive her crowd of applicants with a heart which had never been appreciated than now the bestowal of the hour that belonged to them.

The claims of all were happily adjusted, and the last of the group was moving away, when Katherine discovered in the shade of the doorway a figure that very much resembled that of Ivan, the dumb boy of Clach-na-hard. Ivan's parents were not in such a situation as ever before to have ranked him among the Saturday-night pensioners, and it was therefore with some surprise that she drew him forward to the light and inquired his business.

Ivan's black eyes flashed so intelligently upon the two maids who stood by to execute Katherine's charitable commands, that she could not mistake his desire to be alone with her; and more and more struck with the novelty of one whose mystical language was peculiar only to herself and him, desiring to execute his mission in private, she lighted a candle, and indulged him by walking into the lobby.

When they were alone, the boy turned his luminous eyes from side to side quickly, as if to assure himself of the fact; and then, putting his hand into the bosom of his jacket, he pulled forth a small twisted note, and placed it mysteriously in her hands.

More and more surprised by the singularity of his proceedings, Katherine was about to open the note, and satisfy herself at once respecting its contents; but Ivan clasped his hands over it in an instant, and signed with his fingers the words, "Not now—when you are quite alone."

Katherine was amazed, but Ivan gave her no time for farther questioning. He waited till she had secreted the note, and then, with a flash of satisfaction in his eye, he made his bow and walked out of the house.

Katherine was sufficiently interested by Ivan's mysterious missive to go up stairs immediately to her room and possess herself of its contents. Her heart beat with the remnants of late excitement, and she undid the little paper with an indefinable apprehension. It was written with pencil, and after two or three trials, frustrated by her own agitation and the faintness of the characters, she succeeded in deciphering these words :

" If you do not fear to pollute your own innocence by breathing the same air with a homicide and an outcast, you will come and let me look at you for the last time, in the cave of Clach-na-hard."

There was no date and no signature, and the handwriting was so changed by the feelings of the writer that it was not recognisable. But Katherine's heart needed no such landmarks to guide it; and, despite the sickening agitation which nearly overwhelmed her, it was with something like an exclamation of thankfulness that she raised her eyes to heaven when the paper was read through. Julian was at least safe—safe for the present, and in a little while she should see him, and soothe away the terrible sense of guilt that seemed to weigh upon him. And her father! oh, would not he who carried calm and rest into every heart, however wild its career of sin had been—would not he minister to the erring one, who, despite all his wanderings, was loved so well!

Katherine was obliged to force back the tide of softness that invaded her heart, or it would have unnerved her completely, and she saw before her still a few hours of mighty exertion; for Julian's injunctions of secrecy to Ivan proved that he desired her alone to be informed of his position, and, till she had persuaded him to extend his confidence farther, she was resolved to save the feelings of all.

Katherine knelt down and thanked God for his care of the sheep that had strayed, imploring strength and guidance in the path before her, and the merciful loving-kindness of Him in whose hands are the issues of life. Then, with a cheek whitened by excitement, and a frame which trembled in every nerve till the limbs wellnigh refused to sustain its weight, she walked down stairs to join the circle assembled by the sound of the prayer-bell.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

" But lo ! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
Of yon wild cave, whose jagged brows are fringed
With flaccid ivy."

WORDSWORTH.

" You are paler than ever, dearest Katherine," said Mr. Randolph, in an anxious tone, as Katherine seated herself beside the supper-tray; " I fear you are suffering more than you will confess."

She replied with a ghastly smile, ill calculated to verify the cheerful tone of her words.

" A sound sleep will be my best restorative; I shall be quite well to-morrow."

It was of the utmost importance to Katherine's plans that the family should be this night at rest by the earliest possible hour; and, as not unfrequently happens in cases of less importance, the event so earnestly desired was re-

tarded by a thousand trifling and irritating *contretemps*. Mrs. Randolph had a slight cold, and a cup of elderberry wine must be mulled by Katherine for its relief. Then there happened to be no nutmeg up stairs, and a journey to the storeroom occupied ten minutes of the time which was so valuable. The taste of the invalid was not the most accommodating, and the potion was too strong, and too weak, and too sweet, and too sour, till Katherine was almost in despair at the expense of time which it cost her. Finally, when it was at last pronounced palatable, Mrs. Randolph rose to depart, and bade Katherine follow and assist her to undress. Katherine's trembling hands and wandering attention made her but an indifferent abigail, and the good lady was of the most fastidious of those who have no object to live but the daily routine of trifles.

Katherine never knew the value of her constitutional patience till this night, when it had wellnigh abandoned her. At last, however, the curtains were drawn round her mother's bed, and she descended once more to the parlour, where Mr. Randolph awaited her.

This was an hour which usually Katherine delighted to steal from him, and appropriate to all the sweet familiar confidence which subsisted between them; but to-night the custom must be interrupted, and she thanked Providence that her indisposition furnished her with a ready excuse for the novelty of resigning it. With many injunctions, and prescriptions of warm bath and a long sleep in the morning, her father accordingly ascended with her to the door of her chamber, and when they parted she flung her arms round his neck, and buried her face in his breast as if her strength would have forsaken her.

Oh, could she but have relieved her overburdened spirit by sharing its secret with this precious friend—could she but have given the suffocating tide its way, and wept herself into resignation and tranquillity on his bosom! But it might not be; it was now more than ever impossible; the wellbeing of all depended upon her silence, at least for the night, and she withdrew herself from her father's arms without even shedding a tear. Her look of agony was not to be disregarded, however, and he turned her face to the light and said,

" I am anxious about you, my dear child; you are very ill."

" No, no, dear papa, I am only a little nervous and uncomfortable; I shall be well to-morrow. Good-night, dearest father."

And she bent her head reverently, as was her wont when she would have asked his blessing. He blessed her with a fervent and tender benediction, and without another word they parted.

There was that about the pure, open, and ingenuous nature of Katherine which rendered the load of a secret like the present wellnigh insupportable, and the plans which were forming in her brain a strange and irksome novelty. Yet there was a principle within which enabled her to go through this ordeal. She knew that the fate of her beloved brother hung in the balance; and the remembrance of the fact absorbing every other consideration, she braced herself to meet the difficulties of the moment, and

thought only of the means by which Julian might be best benefited.

Katherine tried to pass the hour that succeeded her father's departure by addressing herself to devotional reading, which ordinarily occupied it, hoping thus to while away the lazy minutes till the household should be asleep; but her heart throbbed and her brain wandered, and she closed the volume as if the endeavour were a mockery.

She watched and watched till every sound had died away, and then she opened the door of her chamber, and stole to the threshold of her father's room, to see whether the lights were yet extinguished. All was dark and still, and she retraced her steps in hope and confidence. She divested herself of the lighter articles of her dress, then wrapped a large tartan cloak round her, and pulled the hood over her forehead. She reached the dining-room with a step like thistle-down, and lifted from the place of its concealment the little basket which she was accustomed to carry about in her visits of charity, and which, in her simple and womanly consideration, she had filled with articles of food for the use of the wanderer.

She listened for a moment to assure herself that all was still ere she approached the low window, lifted the sash with the caution of one who hears danger in the beating of her own heart, and leaped through it on the sward below. She stole along under the shadow until she had reached that part of the house where her father's window overlooked the shrubbery.

To her inexpressible dismay, that window was thrown up, and she distinctly saw her father seated in his dressing-gown at the open casement. It was a glorious winter night, yet this sort of vigil was so unusual with him that she could not help fancying the existence of some undefined sympathy with the disquietude of those dearest to him; and many minutes of rest within the shadow of the wall were necessary to counteract the effect of the alarm which his appearance had occasioned.

The nearest road to Clach-na-hard has already been described. It was a pathway that ran through the manse garden, and across the stepping-stones of the burn; but this road would have led her directly through the hamlet, and Katherine felt unwilling to brave the chance of encountering any wanderers, or the possibility of an alarm from the watchful sheepdogs of the community. She therefore resolved to avoid the village by following a longer track down the stream, and hoped, by crossing the water, which she did not doubt the keen frost would enable her to do, to reach the cave without the slightest risk of interruption.

The unexpected wakefulness of her father, however, rendered this scheme abortive, and Katherine turned her face in the direction of the garden, with a resolution to brave every inconvenience rather than alarm her father at such an hour, or keep poor Julian any longer upon the rack of expectation.

It was a glorious night, for the air was rarefied by the intensity of the frost till every little star in the firmament blazed like a lamp of heaven, and the sprays of the leafless trees glittered and sparkled in their light like the jewel-laden foliage of Aladdin's garden. It was bitterly cold,

yet the fever within hindered Katherine from perceiving the chill of the atmosphere, and she pressed forward without any other recognition of the visible world around her than that the starlight was too clear to admit the idea of danger while walking under its beams. She crossed the ice at the stepping-stones, and her breath came hurriedly as she advanced towards the hamlet.

Her dress was an effectual disguise, yet she trembled at the possibility of encountering any interruption, not more from the risk of discovery than from the natural timidity which rendered her present situation one of such extreme hazard. Two or three cottages were safely passed, and she was beginning to take courage from the total silence that reigned among houses whose very windows her garments swept as she passed, when the sound of a heavy footstep struck her ear, and the loud barking of a dog almost made her scream by its proximity.

A moment's reflection told her that among a community of shepherds, a Saturday night rarely passed in which one or two of them had not a longer trudge than usual over the mountains; and a few steps brought the object of her terror before her, in the shape of a stout herd enveloped in his plaid, and thinking of nothing less than of her or her progress.

A cordial salutation, and a "Whither are you bound?" in Gaelic, however, convinced her that her own appearance was less easily to be accounted for than his, and she steadied her voice to reply, with great presence of mind, and in the same idiom, "For the Ban-leigh; do not stop me."

"Oich! beannachd liebh," was the kind response; and the last of her perils was over.

She now turned the angle of Clach-na-hard which shut out the hamlet from her view, and five minutes more brought her to the natural plantation which lay between her and the point of her hopes. Every nook and crevice of the path had been familiar to her from her childhood, and as she pushed through the low wood, scaring the hares and rabbits hither and thither from her footsteps, sweet and sad visions of early and innocent days gone by shed their halo around the image of Julian, till the yearning of her love and her sympathy carried all minor feelings away with it.

Katherine's place of tryst was a cavern hollowed by the hand of Nature in a bold, bluff crag, that rose sheer and naked from the valley, and formed a portion of the roots of the highest of the mountains that hemmed it in. The crag in question was, as it were, an outshot from the vale of Glenurie, and the wild and matted foliage of the trees hid its base with a shaggy curtain from the eye of the traveller. The broad, clear stream of the Urie flowed past the gorge of the little glen, just where a small sheet of sultry and almost stagnant water, which rested at the foot of the rock, sent out a tributary to join its course, and lent a considerable body to its dashing and sparkling waterfall.

The scene was a striking one even to Katherine's excited and preoccupied senses. The tall, dark rock, rising sheer from the margin of the little loch, and saddening the starlight with its mystical shadow—the thick umbrage of the wood, bearing no broader clothing than the snow-

flakes which the frost had shed upon its branches—the waters sleeping in their solitude, without a breath to stir them, the very emblems of the rest which shall never be broken. All this thrilled her with a feeling which partook just as much of the superstitious as to elevate and excite, without in the smallest degree discomposing her. Accordingly, she took her way, solemnized and in some sort strengthened, through the trees that clung to the roots of the crag, and, passing along the very margin of the loch, stood in a few minutes at the entrance of the cave.

It was so curtained and festooned with ivy, which bore no trace of having been recently disturbed, that Katherine was inclined to discredit her own senses, till she put forth her hand and discovered a plaid hung carefully across the mouth of the cave, as if to hide the rays of light which were streaming from within.

She called softly on Julian by his name, but all was still. Her heart throbbed to suffocation, so that she could scarcely command voice sufficient to repeat her appeal in a louder voice. It was still unheeded, and with some difficulty she pushed aside the screen, and stepped hastily within the archway.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

" You may conceive
The perturbation that ensued—ah, no !
Desperate the maid—the youth is stained with blood :
Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet."

WORDSWORTH.

THE cave of Clach-na-hard was a large, rude chasm in the rock, supported in its arched roof by masses of crag, and floored with the dry, sandy gravel which formed the bed of the river and of the lake. A small outlet on the other side admitted the air, and gave egress to the smoke from a torch of dried pine which had been fixed into the sand, and was blazing in the middle of the apartment.

Katherine needed a few moments to habituate her vision to the red glare of the burning wood, after the soft, pure influence of the starlight ; and when she was capable of distinguishing objects around her, she could perceive the beloved and unhappy subject of all her solicitude folded in his plaid and fast asleep.

It was a singular scene. The black, lichen-covered walls of the cave were now and then displayed by the fitful light of the torch, which sent up a column of smoke in a thousand graceful convolutions to the roof. The ivy that curtailed the entrance had penetrated also far into the interior, and wreathed and twined itself, like Calypso's vine, into a graceful drapery of bright green leaves, that clothed the sides of the rock, even at this wintry season, with verdure, and wantoned over the snowy pebbles which strewed the sand like a tessellated pavement.

By how many sweet and joyous memories of her happy childhood was the place consecrated to the heart of Katherine, when Keith and Marion used to join the sports which its walls had witnessed, or flee with Julian and herself to its shelter from the summer tempest. Little thought had poor Katherine to bestow on visions such as these, as she passed lightly over

the space which divided her from the slumberer. She knelt down upon the ground beside him, and gazed into his face, on which the broad light fell strongly, with such a long and earnest scrutiny as those only have indulged who contemplate the deep and quiet sleep of one beloved and afflicted like him. She held her breath as she hung over him, and her heart swelled with its love and its pity.

How changed he was ! How different looked he from the beautiful boyish sleeper whom she had visited on the last night of his sojourn within the shelter of his paternal roof ! The round, fair outline and fresh bloom of his features were gone, and in their place was the worn and melancholy pallor of an exhausted spirit. He had made a pillow of his cap, and the long black curls fell aside from his forehead, leaving its surface visible, not bland and innocent as before, but darkened and knitted with suffering and anxiety. How touching were the pallid features ! how tenfold dear the careworn and saddened brow !

One glance at the beautiful and beloved countenance served to convince her that, however reckless and imprudent the impulse which had betrayed him—however impetuous might have been his bearing—of the cold-blooded and selfish crime of the duellist he was incapable.

How sweet, and yet how heart-wringing, were the tears which she shed above him ! how she yearned to fold him in her arms, and to proclaim that, though all the world forsook him, yet would not she. How she seemed to pour her very soul forth in its passionate supplication to Heaven to shield and succour him, and how she held her breath, and chid the very beating of her heart, lest the deep sleep of a wearied and grief-worn spirit might be broken !

There is an exquisite and most peculiar enjoyment in watching the slumber of those most dear to us—in feeling that we love them and tend them while they know it not, and that by our own will we withhold for a while the touch or the syllable which would put us in possession of their waking gratitude in an instant.

Katherine watched over her brother for long minutes of silent, breathless tenderness, until his sleep became disturbed, and his breath laboured, and his brow moved with pain and trouble. An expression of scorn and anger discomposed his features, and he flung his arm out as if in pride or defiance ; then a shade of dark and piteous agony, like the sense of remorse, compressed his lip, and made his eyelids shrink and his brow writhe, and then every other feeling passed from his face but one of such exquisite sadness as it wrung the gentle heart of Katherine to look upon. Every feature turned paler and paler with its intensity except the eyelids, and they flushed as if scalding and painful tears would have burst through them. Then his lips quivered, and the name of "Ida" was audibly murmured, and then, with a convulsive sigh, he started up and awoke.

Katherine was kneeling beside him, and he gazed wildly upon her kind and beaming face, as if still struggling with the influence of his dream ; the next moment he uttered a cry that went to the soul of the listener, and, flinging his arms around her, he laid his face upon her shoulder and wept aloud.

Katherine would not interrupt that salutary ride—she mingled her tears with his for a long time in silence, now and then pushing the hair from his forehead, and looking into his eyes with an expression that needed no human language as its medium. At last he withdrew himself from her hold, as if suddenly aware of his own unworthiness, and, retreating a few paces from her side, he said, in a tone of unutterable wretchedness,

“Do you know what brought me here?”

“Yes, yes, dearest Julian, I know all that has happened. Do not think I would inflict the relation upon you,” answered she, gently. “I am come to comfort you, and to bid you trust in Heaven, who will yet lead you safely through this labyrinth of suffering. Do not give way, dear Julian—God is merciful—He will not forsake us.”

“You—you will never be forsaken,” answered Julian, with a hurried tone, and a look that bespoke him perfectly absorbed by one miserable reflection: “and for what wise purpose He has sent me into life to be your bane, I know not. You, oh my innocent sister, must ever be in God’s own peculiar keeping; but I—a homicide—a murderer—I profane the name of Heaven by speaking it!”

He walked to and fro to the limits of the cave with the hurried step of one who longs to escape from some voice within, and Katherine’s heart bled for the agony which she was so helpless to alleviate.

“God’s will is mercy,” said she, in a voice like the whispering of the summer leaves; “He will not lay a burden on you, my brother, that you are unable to bear. Let us hope the message of death has not yet gone forth.”

“Oh, blessings on you, Katherine,” said the boy, passionately; “pray to God that that message be withheld. You are pure and innocent, and you can kneel before Him without fear that his thunderbolt may visit your presumption—pray to Him for your sake, my tender sister—for the sake of Him, his faithful servant, whose name I have outraged—for the sake of her who will not live the mother of a murderer—pray to Him to revoke the fiat which I have braved. Oh, Katherine, if this prayer were but granted—if the stain of a human being’s blood were but washed from my soul, there is no evil of life which could appal me. I would go forth, an alien from my father’s house and an outcast from his presence, in peace—in gratitude to Heaven that the weight of my guilt was at least not heavy enough to crush him to the grave. Oh, Katherine, Katherine! if God would but grant the life of Major Moira!”

The tones of an infant could not more touchingly have expressed the depth of his own helplessness, than did the voice of the unhappy boy as he moaned forth these words of woe. Katherine had no comfort to offer, and her own sobs almost choked her.

“I will go to Inverawe to-morrow, dearest Julian,” said she; “they must have intelligence of him at the house. I shall, at least, endeavour to ascertain the truth.”

“Ah, no,” returned he, while the trace of his agony deepened anew; “do not go—do not send—I dare not listen to the message you would bring me. Do I not know—God forgive and de-

liver me—did I not see the shadows of death upon his face? Ah! if God’s mercy had ordained that I should die in his room, then at least the innocent hearts that I am breaking might have mourned me without the agony of shame and horror that I have laid upon them.”

“I will tell papa to-morrow that you are here, dearest Julian,” said Katherine, “and you will be far, far the happier of telling all your grief and your repentance to him. We shall have his prayers, too, and God will have pity on us all for his sake.”

The proposal seemed to put him to the torture, and he continued to walk up and down, the image of misery and despair. At last Katherine rose from her resting-place on the earth, and joined his agitated march; and, laying her hand softly upon his arm, while her cheek blanched, and her voice became wellnigh inaudible from emotion, she said,

“You did not mean to hurt Major Moira, dear Julian?”

“No, no, no, God is my witness I did not,” answered he, with a fresh burst of feeling. “Listen, and I will tell you how it was, and you shall be the judge of my hopes of pardon at the hand of God: from man I desire none—life must be a burden to me forever.”

A moment passed before he had collected his thoughts, and then he began to speak with a face pale with anxiety, and an eye fixed upon Katherine as if intent to catch the slightest variation it might present.

“I know,” said he, “that Major Moira was provoked to send the challenge; but they all assured me that, as a friend to Ida de Mar, I could not allow such an outrage as he committed to pass unnoticed; and when I had consented to stand forth and choose between the crimes of murder and suicide, oh, Katherine, our father himself could scarcely have looked with more abhorrence on the act. Sullivan accompanied me to the ground, and is my witness that twice over I fired in the air, and when my antagonist demanded a third shot I was prepared to do so again, but for his express desire that I should not throw away my life. Then—O woe is me!—I was persuaded to lower my weapon; but even when my shot took its fatal effect, God, who knoweth all things, knows that it was fired without an aim. Oh, Katherine, Katherine, you are too pure to conceive the agony that seized me when my victim lay covered with his own blood at my feet. If human suffering could atone for crime, I think that even mine might have been expiated.”

Katherine threw her arms round his neck, and soothed the convulsion of feeling into which the relation threw him, until he grew calm enough to resume his miserable tale.

“They carried him, half insensible, into a cottage near the spot, and then tried to drag me away, lest those who are better judges of crime should track the scene which had witnessed mine; but I refused. The sight of my own work was maddening me, and I would not leave the dying man till I had heard my pardon from his own mouth—till I had poured out my agonies before him, and implored him not to leave this earth with a curse upon his lips. And he lifted himself up to speak to me, and called them all to witness that I was not to blame—that I

had not fired till he demanded that I should—that he had *seen* me fire at random, even when fate had directed the bullet with such precision—and then—and then Sullivan lifted me in his arms and carried me from the spot, and I remember nothing till I found myself in a post-chaise with Sullivan, who brought me to Glenurie, and then hurried forward to the coast, where he is to embark for Holland."

Katherine felt inexpressibly relieved by these particulars. Her task of communicating the sad news to her father seemed lightened of half its terrors by the new aspect which they lent to Julian's share of the transaction, and she even felt courage enough to question him delicately and kindly upon the circumstances in which the event had originated.

Julian summed up all by taking letters from his pocket, with their seals unbroken, which had been written to be forwarded to his father had he been the victim of his own crime, and placed them in Katherine's hands, with orders to break the seals, and do what she thought right with them afterward. They contained all that his father must be desirous of knowing, and such an appeal besides as might be supposed to be offered by a son to a parent whom he was addressing for the last time.

Throughout the long hours of that night the brother and sister rested beside each other on the floor of the cave, or paced up and down within its precincts, the one giving way to the agony of an overburdened soul, the other pouring forth the whole tenderness of hers in the endeavour at consolation. She did not dare to advert to the terrible sentence in the newspaper in allusion to the punishment which awaited him, although her heart shook within her at the bare remembrance; and all that Julian suffered, the whole sum of his wretchedness, seemed comprised in the agonizing conviction of Major Moira's death. Even the effect which Katherine's disclosure might produce upon his father seemed forgotten in this heavier and more intolerable fear; and Katherine found her promises of intelligence from Inverawe, and her cheerful and pious hope, all inadequate to sustain his spirit from the prostration of utter despair.

At last she looked through the leafy screen, and found that the stars were looking pale as if from the reflex of the dawn, and that her return home, if it were to be performed with any hope of secrecy, must be no longer deferred. It was grievous to leave him all alone with his misery, but heavier consequences might attend her remaining, and with tears and blessings she prepared for her departure. She emptied her little basket of its flask of wine and its loaf of wheat-bread, and she gathered chips, and ferns, and withered leaves from the far corner of the cave, and heaped them at the mouth of the smaller opening, that Julian might light his own fire when the cold hour of dawn should overtake him; and then drawing her hood once more over her face, and with a promise of seeing him many times throughout the day, she spoke her last kind words of comfort and solace, and stepped forth upon her walk.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"The quality of mercy is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

SHAKSPEARE.

A FLEET and hurried step bore Katherine to her home; and it was not until she had leaped a second time through the window of the parlour, and glided unheard into the sanctuary of her own apartment, that she took time almost to breathe in safety, or to steal one glance of security from beneath the covert of her hood. It was almost seven o'clock, and her heart beat at the danger which she had encountered by lingering to such an hour, for the first white streaks of morning were opening the eyelid of the sky with a faint and drowsy glimmer, and sounds of life were audible in the household even as she listened.

Katherine did not dream of slumber, for her mind was too powerfully occupied with the load which rested on it to admit even of the inclination; and she flung aside her cloak, and busied herself with her morning toilet, first discomposing the coverings of her bed, to hinder the discovery of its having been unoccupied.

Refreshed and braced by the exercise of dressing, Katherine seated herself, as was her wont, to the innocent routine of her morning devotions. Strong was the faith that breathed in her petitions, and fervent the prayers which rose on the breeze of the morning to that throne where all the trust of her heavy heart was placed. The holy influence of the Sunday was upon her—her spirit was soothed and calmed by the sense of rectitude, and the pure and unwavering trust of its humility. And oh! how sweet were the thanks that she offered for the conviction of Julian's innocence from what had ever been, in her spotless and unprejudiced views, the heaviest part of the sin which was thus visited. How earnest, how ardent the entreaty for pardon and peace to the dear and suffering penitent—how warm and tearful the petition for strength and support to the dear one whose sorrow had not yet found him out!

Katherine rose from her knees with a spirit elevated into that joy with which the stranger intermeddles not—that peace which dwelleth in a heart fixed and trusting in God. Much and painful exertion was before her on this eventful and important day, and she felt that she needed all, and more than all, the strength which her firm faith awarded to bear her successfully through its trials. She felt already that her strength of mind and body was taxed to the uttermost, and her spirit yearned for the support of the strong arm and the faithful heart which made her peace its own. She resolved to tell Keith her whole tale of sorrow, and to use his nobleness and strength in default of her own shrinking courage.

She seated herself accordingly, and wrote a grave, kind billet, requesting him to come immediately to the manse, and to prepare himself for a ride to Inverawe, which a pressing emergency induced her to impose on him.

Once more she took her way to the fateful glen of Clach-na-hard, and this time she thanked Heaven that her errand needed no secrecy to load her steps with terror, since not even at this wintry season was her morning walk of

ten intermittent. She betook herself to the habitation of Donald and Peggy—intrusted her note to the former, with orders to take the fleetest sheltie from the hill, and ride without drawing bridle to Inverhaggernie ; and then, smothering a sad longing to track out her midnight footsteps to the cave, she returned, barely in time to preside at the breakfast-table.

Her father's tender inquiries again menaced poor Katherine's half-recovered strength, and she was forced to confess that the morning had not found her so well as she expected ; but the proposal that she should stay at home and nurse herself was overruled. She dared not use the plea of illness to excuse her wandering out again to the cave, and what terrible companionship would her own thoughts furnish throughout a day of solitude !

Katherine walked to church leaning upon her father's arm ; and the cheerful and affectionate tone of his words made her heart bleed, from the contrast they presented to those which she was so shortly to hear from his lips.

He ascended the pulpit steps amid the accustomed looks of love and reverence that greeted him, and but one direful impression rested upon Katherine's soul—that they would all be shortly turned to pity and compassion. She listened to him as he described the terrible inheritance of sin—its never-dying sting, and its far-spread contagion of misery and disgrace—the momentary impulse of unrestrained passion, and its long, bitter lifetime of consequences—until she welnigh believed that some awful inspiration had supplied him with the features of his own child's destiny.

At last that long and painful service came to an end. Mr. Randolph followed the call of his noonday duties to the bed of the sick, and Katherine walked anxiously Homeward to receive Keith.

A bitter disappointment awaited her : a note was given her from Marion, containing the intelligence that her brother had left home on the previous day, and was not expected before the succeeding one.

"God help me !" said poor Katherine, mournfully ; " I have no trust but in him."

Let not those to whom in imagination alone there has ever existed a similar trial to that which now awaited Katherine, under-estimate in anywise its depth of bitterness. There was something in the twofold anguish of heaping misery on the head of one dear object, and of revealing the bitterly-repentant crime of another, which seemed a grief too mighty for her to bear. She durst not palliate the offence which she well knew to be so heavily accounted of in the tender conscience of the man of God, although she knew it to be the weapon which would cut most sharply into his peace, and the poisoned drop which would envenom his very love for the spirit-stricken penitent. She shrank with something like an emotion of terror from the prospect of her father's agony and her mother's disgrace—what wonder, then, that she watched the return of the former with an anxious and agitated apprehension that sickened her very soul.

At last he came—she heard his footstep in the lobby ; and the turning of the lock of his room-door made her heart sink like the knell of

the criminal's doom. She walked up and down the dining-room in a vain endeavour after composure, which produced no effect but that of agitating her more and more. The longer she dwelt upon her trial, the more bitter and appalling did it become, and the more did that strength diminish which she felt even now to be welnigh exhausted. Twice did she walk to the door of the little library, and twice lift her hand from off the lock, with the acknowledgment that she was unfit to enter. She was not willing to alarm her father needlessly, by betraying the extent of her emotion while he was yet ignorant of its cause, and she stole even another and another minute to command herself anew. Poor Katherine ! had it been an error of her own she was about to confess, how short had been the struggle—how lowly the submission to whatsoever might befall !

At length the sickening indecision gave way, and with colourless features and parched lip she advanced the third time to her father's door. "God sustain and prosper me !" was her fervent ejaculation, and the next moment she had entered the room.

The usual kind inquiries after the effect of his morning labours—the offer of luncheon, &c., served to open the conversation, and poor Katherine lingered over them this day with an unusual precision. At last it was her father's turn to speak.

" I am not at ease about you, Katherine," said he, in a voice of the tenderest solicitude ; " you look worse than ever this morning. Have you any pain, my poor child ? "

" Yes, papa," answered Katherine, with a smile, and seating herself in her usual posture at his feet ; " and I am come to tell you the nature of it. I would have made my confession last night, but I feared that it might interfere with the comfort of your duties this morning."

She watched him anxiously, and he laid his hand upon her shoulder with a look of great surprise.

" I am not ill, dear papa," continued she, " but I am very unhappy. I have had news from Julian."

Her voice gave way entirely, and a long, low sob finished the sentence.

" What news, my child ? Speak it quick, and relieve yourself," said Mr. Randolph, hastily, and, as it appeared, more anxious to soothe Katherine than anything else. " You have been hiding this agitation till it has hurt you—what of Julian ? "

" He is very, very unhappy, dear papa," said the gentle girl, in a tone of agony, from which all restraint seemed nearly banished ; " he has offended his superior officer in a way which draws down some terrible consequences ; and he has been obliged to fly, and the thought of your grief for his error is destroying him."

Mr. Randolph breathed quick for a few moments, as if the shock of these words had stunned him ; and then he said, in a tone which struggled to be calm,

" Do not withhold the truth from me, Katherine. I know very well that there is but one crime from the consequence of which Julian would find it necessary to fly. Am I to hear that my child has lifted his hand against the life of a fellow-creature ? "

"Oh, father, if you could see him—if you could but witness the agony he endures," said Katherine, with a burst of passionate emotion, "you would not have power to deny that he was his own most rigid judge. Oh! do not you judge him harshly, dearest father—he is stricken to the dust already—one look of anger from you will destroy him quite. Oh! wait until you hear his self-accusal—his self-abhorrence—his lowliness of remorse and sorrow—and you will see that it is support and consolation that he requires, and not severity. Oh, papa! is it not ever the soothing and the balm of Christian hope which you delight to carry to the soul of the suffering penitent? Wait till you see Julian before you refuse him the tenderness you shed upon all besides."

"Compose yourself, my dear Katherine," said Mr. Randolph, as her passionate appeal brought the moisture of sympathy and affection to his own eyes; "it is no human condemnation that Julian has to fear—and one worm of the dust lacks both right and power to sit in judgment upon the actions of another. My reproofs will not go to swell the measure of his endurance. But what is this you tell me—when I *see* him? Have you seen him, then, since this blow fell on him? Has he been imprudent enough to shape his flight from the face of justice to the home of his mother and sister?"

"Yes, dear father," answered Katherine, still sobbing piteously; "he is here—in the cave of Clach-na-hard, couching with the fox and the badger. He cares nothing for his own danger—I believe that he would rather discover himself than not—but oh, dearest father, it is the danger of Major Moira which seems to turn his brain. He will not leave the country while he is ignorant of his fate."

A heart-sickened look of misery passed across her father's face at these wretched words, containing, as they did, the heaviest and most terrible half of her sad intelligence. He covered his eyes for a moment with his hand, and Katherine could see the paleness stealing over his forehead and eyelids, which with him was always an index of intense mental suffering.

"God help him!" said he, at last, in a softened voice; "with a weight like this to crush him to the earth, he needs little more to humble him."

Katherine seized the moment of pity to present the letter which Julian had given her.

"It was intended to reach you only, had matters happened differently," said she; "but it contains all that you may wish to learn, and which is still unknown to me."

Mr. Randolph took the letter in silence, and Katherine walked to the window, that he might read it unobserved. Her heart ached wellnigh to breaking as every labouring and long-drawn breath of her father testified to the depth and bitterness of the wound she had inflicted, and she was half tempted to blame herself for not sparing to him the additional agony of the letter; but Julian was to be the gainer by all that had been elicited, and she knew not which claim to consider most pressing.

The letter occupied Mr. Randolph a long half hour, and Katherine imagined that its contents were familiar to her from the very intensity of their effects. It was as follows:

"I have heard you a hundred times declare that the crime of the duellist was one of the darkest in the catalogue of man's offences; that it rendered the perpetrator equally unworthy of the mercy of God and the companionship of men, and that all errors of youth or of manhood should receive your compassion and forgiveness before that one. Do you not wonder, then; that I dare, under the brand which you have thus characterized, address myself to you for the purpose of imploring your forgiveness for its assumption—your prayers for the mercy of Heaven—and your blessing as the solace of what may be my last hours! I offer no palliation of the crime, which is not more abhorrent to your nature than to my own. I have nothing to advance in my own defence; I have sinned before Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: I did not send the challenge, and this is all I have to plead in extenuation. I have nothing to tell you which might serve to prove that your holy and just precepts have not been sown upon the whirlwind. You will ask the motive of my crime, and it too shall be confessed: the world looked coldly on my altered prospects, and *he* supplanted me where I would not that any human being should be my rival. This is all; and its momentary effect upon my mad and headstrong passions has disappeared, and left me only the consciousness that every hour of the future may be tinged by it. One comfort—one ground of peace I can still offer you; it is this: however my own life may be put in peril by this perversity, no human blood shall ever thus be spilled at my hand. Father! these may be my last words to you—I trust they may not—oh! I trust in God's unbounded mercy that they may not—for I dare not pray to him for pardon with the deliberate purpose of crime upon my soul, and neither can I rush into his presence without the hope of his forgiveness. If I durst approach his throne, it would be to implore life; that I might repent and have peace. Let me hope that He who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children will also visit the holiness of his chosen upon their worthless offspring. If these are my last words to you, O my father, forgive the prodigal who has cost you only sorrow from the cradle; think of him, I pray you, with more of sorrow than of anger. Pray to God for my sake, and comfort the beloved ones whom I am about so cruelly to outrage, and with the assurance that I have not bid adieu to life before it became worthless in my eyes. I am unworthy to address you—I am unworthy of your pity and your pardon. And oh—and oh, the dear ones at home—tell them that the heart which this bitterest crime polluted beat with undying affection to the last. Father! forgive me—pray for me—command me to Him who was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Is't enough I'm sorry?
Thus children temporal fathers do appear."
SHAKSPEARE.

KATHERINE turned many times towards her father before she perceived that he had ceased

to ponder the letter she had committed to him. At last, however, she discovered that his hand was resting over his eyes, and she advanced gently to his side and said, in a voice of entreaty,

"You will see poor Julian, father, will you not?"

"Yes, my child," answered Mr. Randolph, meekly, "we shall visit him together. Sit down beside me, Katherine, and speak to me of our common sorrow without reserve. Do not fear the severity of my judgment. Julian has no aggravation of suffering to apprehend from me. I am not so free of blame myself in this matter, that I can weigh his conduct in a balance thus rigid."

Katherine looked inquiringly, and he answered to her glance.

"Had I followed the dictates of your prompt generosity, my dear child, and suffered you to put your brother in possession of your plans for his prosperity, this evil would not have befallen. If, in my weak and short-sighted judgment, I had not fancied that the trial of fortitude, the sense of self-dependance, would strengthen and improve him, I should never have been so fatally convinced that the stimulant was destined to act as a poison. I forgot my own prophecy, that the sense of inferiority would prove fatal to him; and now I am only roused into consciousness by its fulfilment. But this is not my most pressing subject of disquiet. I must know the worst part of the evil. What is the injury to Major Moira? and why, after a vow so solemn as this," and he pointed to the letter, "has any such been inflicted?"

"Julian told me, dear papa," answered Katherine, "that it was only when his obstinate determination not to fire had exasperated his adversary to the highest degree, and after he had several times stood while the balls passed him by, that he was induced to make use of his weapon, and even then it was but, as he imagined, to fire it into the air."

"And is there no means of learning the issue?" asked Mr. Randolph, with a slight shudder.

"I will go myself to Inverawe," replied she. "I was in hopes that Keith might have been our messenger, but he has quitted home, and poor Julian must not be kept on the rack longer than is necessary—I will go."

It was not till the early dusk fell on the face of nature that Katherine and her father ventured to take their way to the lonely shelter of the fugitive; and her heart ached to see the continual caution with which her father turned his steps from the haunts of men, and walked stealthily through brake and thicket. They scarcely exchanged words throughout their walk; but Katherine traced the furrow of care and suffering which defaced the bland smoothness of her father's brow, and the compression of lip that marked the effort of self-control as they moved along, and she told her own heart that Julian's punishment had already found him out.

It was a gray, sombre evening, amid which the twilight stole over the face of Nature, and left her veil upon its lineaments with so still and breathless an influence that the very air seemed solemnized. It was an evening which

the spirit, awaking from a long sleep of days, would instantly have recognised as a Highland Sabbath; and, in her own despite, Katherine acknowledged its influence. There was not a breeze stirring, and even the frost seemed giving way, for the intense cold was softened into that half-humid mildness which so often, at least in Scotland, succeeds to it; and in the sullen calm of the air the small black loch of Clach-na-hard lay gloomy and ominous like the waves of the Dead Sea.

Katherine had the utmost difficulty to sustain her composure. Everything around her served as food for the melancholy dejection of her spirit, and she felt every moment as if the efforts of the last two days would give way to a burst of hysterical weeping.

At last they approached the mouth of the cave, and Katherine pushed aside the ivy boughs to make way for her father's entrance. The pine-torch was not, as formerly, sending forth its wild glare from the centre of the floor, but in its place a single candle burned upon the large stone which served the outcast for a table. Katherine's consideration had furnished it for him; and an open volume, upon which its rays fell, gave the place something the air of an anchorite's cell.

Julian was on his knees beside the rock, with his clasped arms resting on it, and his face buried mournfully upon them. There was something wildly picturesque, and even affecting, in the scene. Julian's attitude seemed to indicate the very prostration of humility; and though his form was too young and graceful to suggest the terrible ideas of remorse and penitence, yet there was something so touching in its kneeling posture, that the soul sympathized involuntarily with the utter overthrow of manhood's pride and daring which it confessed.

Mr. Randolph advanced to the very side of the fugitive unheeded, though his breath came and went audibly under the pressure of his agony.

"Julian!" said he, at last—and Katherine's heart stopped its beating in her eagerness to watch for the reply; "my son, look up."

Julian turned round hastily, and his face became visible to the intruders. There was a bright youthful flush, as if of hope or enthusiasm, on his cheek, and large, childlike tears were glittering upon his eyelashes.

Mr. Randolph read the soul of the boy in that lowly yet faithful glance, and the next moment he had folded him to his heart; while Katherine, struggling to repress a sob of joy, glided from the cave.

Oh, how much of the dreaded unhappiness of this day had she already overcome! How much had she for which to thank Heaven and congratulate herself! She could scarcely believe her own heart when its bound of hope and gratitude told her that Julian was in his father's arms, and she walked along the path to the hamlet in a tremour of half-defined enjoyment.

Who does not recognise the dancing exuberance of feeling which follows our miserable despair, when a trial we have anticipated passes over us, and leaves nothing but a trace of softness behind? There is a springy and joyous sense of relief upon the soul, which makes every cloud melt and vanish for the time, and, what-

ever may in reality be the complexion of our fate, tinges the whole sky above us with the glow of happiness.

Katherine had found the task of communicating their common trial to her father so much less formidable than she expected—had witnessed his meeting with the fugitive so much more happily than she had dared to anticipate, that all other sources of disquiet seemed to lose themselves in the satisfaction of the present; and she was again and again obliged to contemplate the object of her present mission, before she could tame down her climbing hopes to the level of reason.

Katherine knew that poor Julian's great subject of horror and despair was yet unassuaged, and resolved that her efforts should not be wanting to remove whatever part of his burden depended on the agony of doubt or a busy imagination. She was determined to walk that night to Inverawe, where she already knew that his lordship was in residence, and from his own lips learn how it had really fared with Major Moira.

Once more she applied to her faithful coadjutor Donald, and bade him put on his brogues to give her his attendance in a walk to the great house. Then, never regardless, in the most important emergency, of the trivial attention due to another, she bade Peggy despatch Ivan to the manse with her father's compliments, and a request that Mrs. Randolph should not wait tea for him; while, with a strong and trustful heart, she set out, under Donald's guardianship, for Inverawe.

The porter's lodge of Inverawe lay but a short half mile down the margin of Loch Urie; but, as the rest of the way led for nearly two miles more through the noble wood which imbosomed the house itself, Katherine found her courage in nowise adequate to encounter such a pilgrimage on a winter's night without such stalwart protection as that of her friend Donald. Accordingly, they moved along very nearly side by side, while now and then, by way of enlivening their long march, Donald would endeavour to amuse his young lady with some of the simple doings of the hamlet, and Katherine would banish the reflective humour gendered by her own peculiar sorrows, and gladden his heart by her kindly interest in the news communicated.

Highlanders in general, whatever may be their condition in life, are every whit gentlemen; nor can familiarity of intercourse impair, by the most remote degree, the absolute deference and respect with which they usually demean themselves towards a superior, more especially should that superior be a lady, in which case she may converse fluently and with much advantage for any length of time she may find it agreeable, and be in no single instance reminded of the absence of breeding, which makes a similar intercourse wellnigh impossible to a Lowlander of the same class.

Accordingly, Katherine journeyed on, beguiling her own turbulent thoughts by the interest with which she forced herself to listen to Donald's conversation; and now and then, when a pause occurred, looking round with wonder and enjoyment upon the strange scene which the forest presented, under the witchcraft of the streaming moonlight. The snow was still lying

upon the surface of the earth, and the naked and giant boughs flung shadows of such startling and unearthly shapes across the path, as made her sometimes spring aside in terror; while the tall, black pines that wrapped themselves in their everlasting verdure, and looked down like cynics upon the desolation of their brethren, sometimes made the darkness so intense that she scarce knew, even with the moonlight, where to place her footsteps.

It is like wandering in a dream to thread the mazes of a forest path under the uncertain guidance of the moon. There is such an air of mystery—such a vague resemblance to life in all the objects which are around, and the simplest forms of nature take such fanciful and curious shapes, that the imagination is excited to a sort of terror, which is pleasing or painful according to the mood on which it is ingrafted.

Katherine's feelings had this day been irritated by so many subjects of real sorrow and anxiety, that her firmness was at the mercy of every breath that blew; and as the low wind rose gradually from the loch, and swung the pine trees till they creaked, she would start at every sound of their gigantic boughs, till Donald wondered at her unusual lack of courage.

At last they reached the entrance of the great house; and as Katherine heard the echoing of the bell, whose summons was to open its doors for her entrance, she felt that the next half hour would colour the fate of those dearest to her.

Her face was well known to all the domestics, and the man stared as if he could scarcely believe his eyes when they rested upon her. But Katherine was accustomed to absolute respect wherever she was known; and when she begged admittance to the presence of Lord Inverawe, the man did not seem to think it necessary even to beg permission to conduct her thither.

"Is his lordship perfectly alone and disengaged?" asked she, afraid of the possibility of being shown into a room with strangers.

"Quite alone in the study," was the reply; and Katherine's courage rose at the prospect. She had nothing to fear. Surely the sin of the brother could not influence the manner of her host towards the sister, particularly when she came to offer inquiries and condolences of the most sincere and heartfelt description. Oh, should they be already too late! And the deadly paleness which followed such a doubt still wrapped her cheek when she stepped across the threshold of the door that was opened for her.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Black night will follow summer's fairest sun,
And spring's fair promise yield to autumn's tears;
The dawn but travels till the day is done,
And cold, bleak age will tread on youth's bright years."

The moon had sunk beneath the edge of the hill, and thick clouds had gathered, obscuring even the light which she might have cast behind her, and breaking it into fitful and murky gleams. Here and there a rift in the heavens revealed the dark, frosty blue of night, and the stars sparkled through as if to mock the tumult of the sky by their clear beauty. The wind, too, had risen, and moaned and wailed among the bare branches, and murmured drearily in the waters of the loch.

It was an unquiet night, and might have excused the fanciful notion that the spirits of light and of darkness were struggling with each other to obtain possession of it.

Julian Randolph stood beside the entrance of the cave, and looked out upon the dark night with an anxiety that seemed to neutralize his desire of concealment, for his whole figure was distinctly visible as he stood with folded arms leaning against the ivied rock. His face was turned upward to the sky, and the starlight quivered over it, lending a deeper intensity to the paleness of excitement and solemnity with which it was already marked.

His father's visit had left Julian in a mood of high-wrought and yet holy enthusiasm, the effect partly of his own over-excited feelings, partly of the sweet counsel they had taken together, and the words of lofty cheer which the good minister had used to sustain his child withal. Mr. Randolph had yearned over the boy with a heart softened and wounded by the excess of self-abasement which he evinced, and the words of sorrow and anger died upon his lips, or were displaced by exhortations to hope and believe in the tenderness of the hand which chastened him.

The enthusiasm of faith and gratitude had not yet faded away, when Julian, after his father's departure, stationed himself at the mouth of the cave to watch the return of Katherine, the nature of whose mission was whispered to him by a hundred little voices that spoke of her mindful and undaunted love. The shadows were deep and long, and the clouds that every now and then came over the light of the stars left the little wood in thick darkness, so that Julian strained his eyeballs for a while in a vain endeavour to trace a moving form amid the thicket.

At last, however, a dark object was visible at a distance, but its progress was so slow, so different from the light, fleet step of Katherine, that Julian's heart beat with the dread of some strange footstep breaking in upon his seclusion. He withdrew immediately into the cave, and satisfied himself with gazing out from between the trellise of ivy which he drew again over the orifice.

He watched and watched, and for a while nothing was audible except the throbbing of his own pulses; but at last a slow, unequal footstep was heard among the gravel, and Julian held his breath as it came nearer and nearer to the place of his concealment. Slow, slow and heavy it was, as if of some one who was either a stranger to the insecure footing of the shingle, or unequal to the effort of making his way among it, and once or twice the listener could distinctly trace the sound of a slight stagger, as if the wanderer had lost his footing for the moment entirely.

At last the intruder approached so close that Julian heard his breathing. A hand was laid upon the ivy boughs, and a feeble grasp pulled them aside, and the next moment Julian received the form of his sister in his arms as she fell motionless on the threshold of the cave.

"He is dead!" said Julian: "I know that it was the thought of my agony that overwhelmed her. His blood is on my hand."

He laid his sister upon the ground, and before he tried to recover her from her terrible swoon, he knelt down beside her and put his forehead to the earth. He humbled himself in lowliness of heart before Him who is the Judge and the Avenger.

"Thy will be done, O God! What am I that I would revoke thy judgments? Thou knowest the heart and the reins; I would that I had died for him!"

He was stricken to the dust, but the agony of remorse was not among the lines that marked his brow. He felt in that solemn hour that the eye which reads the heart saw that, of the blood of this man, in part at least, he was guiltless; that the death which now bowed him down with so heavy a load of misery, was, in the sight of God, the fruit of one of those inscrutable accidents of which He is the sole director, rather than the result of any exercise of will on the part of Julian.

He was solemnized and afflicted, and he felt that the visitation of God was upon him, but that appalling sense of guilt which had accompanied the previous uncertainty was gone. The pure and lofty converse of his father had banished it—that God in his infinite mercy might not lay upon him a burden heavier than he could bear. He could look up to heaven, and say "Thy will be done," without feeling that he had forfeited the privilege even of submitting. He had deserved God's chastenings, and he bowed to them in lowliness of heart; but he did not sorrow without hope, for he felt as if the certainty of the world's rigorous judgment forestalled the anger of Heaven, and changed it into love and mercy. The boy's early training was uppermost again, and in the hour of his heaviest condemnation he felt the hallowing love of those who are "forgiven much."

Nevertheless, it was a heavy and bitter weight of anguish that blanched his cheek to such a leaden pallor; and as he bent over poor Katherine, and chafed her palms and temples with his hands, he almost feared to see her open her eyes, and to read the agony which their opening must reveal. In a few minutes, however, the colour came feebly to her lips, and she raised her eyelids with a languid and half conscious gaze around the cave.

The first glimpse of Julian's anxious countenance woke her into life and sense immediately. She sprang towards him with a feeble cry of misery, and clung round his neck as if fearful that Fate, in her cruelty, would inflict the direst pang of all, and tear him from her. She clasped him in her arms, and looked wildly from side to side, as if she thought the hand of vengeance could reach him even there; and then, as her eyes rested on the fair and youthful forehead, and the clear eyes so dimmed by suffering, her self-control gave way entirely, and she burst into a long, piteous wail of sobs and tears, that saddened even the walls of that rude lair by the sound of its desolation.

"Julian, my beloved, you are not his murderer—you raised no hand against his life—the mark of Cain is not upon your forehead—you will not be an outcast—they shall not touch a hair of your head, my brother. No, no, no—we shall live here together always—no evil can ever touch you here!" said Katherine, in a wild and hurried tone, when the first agony of her tears was over, and Julian's words of soothing had broken the spell of her distress. "Does not our father say that there is no stain of blood upon your soul, and will God allow the punishment of a crime to visit you which your whole nature loathes? You who are so good, and kind, and gentle to all living that you would not hurt a worm with your will—you, my own Julian, a

wilful homicide! Oh! no, no, no—those cruel and haughty words were only the overflows of a bleeding spirit on those who, against their own will, had injured it. Do not look so broken-hearted, Julian. Look up to God, my brother, and ask Him from whom no secrets are hid whether the soul of a murderer ever dwelt in your bosom. Tell me, Julian, after all the words of holiness that our father has spoken to you—tell me whether you feel unworthy to kneel down and pray for God's support and forgiveness. Do you not feel that, whatever frailties and errors he may witness in your heart, this deadly crime can never outrage the pure eyes that deign to examine it. Do you not feel so safe, so blessed in his love and his mercy, that the vengeance of man, and his power to fling disgrace upon your name, is less than nothing in the opposite balance? Tell me this, dear Julian, and no evil will be too heavy to sustain."

The boy looked down upon the pale face that was turned up to him, all working with the strong feelings of the soul that beamed upon it, and the glance went instantly to the inmost sanctuary of his soul. The softest tears of love and gratitude came raining over his cheek, and he took Katherine in his arms, and soothed and caressed her even as they fell.

"Yes, my beloved sister," said he, in a tone which, though sad and lowly, conveyed no impression to the listener that was not sweet; "I thank God's Holy Spirit for that exemption from the heaviest burden of guilt and horror. My conscience refuses to appropriate the guilt which the world will lay upon me. Look you up, my Katherine, and be comforted, if the conviction that I am innocent of imbruing my own hands in the blood of my fellow can bring you comfort. Even the terrible intelligence you have brought has not found me unprepared nor unsubmissive. Would you have yet farther evidence of my peace with God, dear Katherine? Let us ask his blessing together."

The brother and sister knelt hand in hand upon the naked earth within that wild and rugged temple, into which no eye save that of Him whom they addressed could penetrate. There was no word spoken between them, but the raised eyes, filled with the fervour of the soul, and the heaving bosoms, within which the heart laboured with its fulness, needed no medium of human voice to carry their prayers to Him whom we best worship in spirit and in truth.

The clasp of love and joy which followed this mute compact left Katherine composed enough to answer the eager inquiries addressed to her on the subject of her interview with Lord Inverawe, and Julian very soon contrived to make himself master of all the details which she had originally resolved to hide from him. He learned that Major Moira had expired within a few hours after his own flight—that the bereaved and afflicted parent was unable, even in Katherine's presence, to restrain the threats of vengeance against the destroyer of his only child, and that a hot pursuit had already been set on foot for the apprehension of the fugitive.

Julian bore every wound inflicted by the narrative with the heroism which was the growth of his humility; but when Katherine dwelt with terror and dismay upon the search for him which was already begun, he tried to lead her thoughts into a different view of the danger which appalled her.

"Remember, dearest Katherine," said he,

"that the most direct evidence of my guilt with which I could furnish my accusers would be implied in my desire of evading the demands of justice. Nothing would tempt me to absent myself from the trial which is sure to take place. Nay, I should be infinitely more pleased that the surrender of my person was a voluntary act, than my capture the mere success of the pursuit. I trust that God will so far pity the dear ones who must be implicated in my disgrace, that I may be spared the sentence of the law. Yet, if it should be otherwise, remember, dearest Katherine, that no evils can overwhelm you if the sense of God's favour be restored to me. Remember your promise that all should be borne with patience and fortitude when peace was again upon the heart of the sinner."

This was a terrible sentence with which to say farewell; and when Katherine had at last discovered that her longer stay would alarm the inmates of the manse for her safety, she once more spoke her good-night to Julian, and with a slow step and a heavy heart took her way homeward.

Again and again she turned to speak some other little sentence of hope and comfort ere she departed. Again and again she was on the eve of yielding to her desire of remaining with him altogether, and as often did Julian use all his influence to induce her to hasten home to their father, and cheer him with the support which she had already afforded to himself. She could not bear to leave him all alone to the society of his gloomy and sorrowful thoughts; and as often as she turned her head, and caught a glimpse of the wan features, and sad, sweet smile with which he was gazing after her, the warm tears gushed to her eyes as if in testimony to the additional tenderness with which the errors and the sufferings of those we love inspire us.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Good sir, whose powers are these?"—SHAKESPEARE.

KATHERINE's trials were not over even for this night; for she had still to communicate to her father the fatal intelligence from Inverawe of which she had been the bearer. When she arrived he was waiting for her in the dining-room alone, having persuaded her mother to go to bed in anticipation of the nature of the business which had detained her, and in anxious and agitated apprehension of its results. Katherine's heart died within her at the first glimpse of her father's countenance, with its tale of deep and eager anxiety, and its lines of care and suffering. She could not answer his inquiries—voice and language failed her, and she threw herself on his bosom with a mute betrayal of all the evil that had fallen, and for a while her weeping was the only sound that rose upon the ear.

"Tell me the worst, my child," said the good man, in a tone of calm resignation; "whatsoever seemeth good in His sight shall be acceptable in mine. Is Major Moira dead?"

Katherine sobbed out her reply to this question, and for a while there was a deep silence of solemn and painful thought.

"God's will be done!" said Mr. Randolph, at last. "I thank him for the conviction that my child is not a voluntary homicide; in all besides, his punishment falls where it is due."

Presently Mr. Randolph became more composed; but the pale rigidity of his features, and the low, heart-broken tones of his voice, wrung the heart of Katherine with an agony of sympathy and regret scarcely inferior to her anguish in the cave. She strove to lessen the weight of the blow by every extenuating circumstance she could advance—she dwelt upon the death-scene of Major Moira, and his repeated declarations of her brother's innocence, and she described poor Julian's calm and humble submission to the chastisement of Heaven with a force and earnestness which could not be without their effects. She kept out of view the bitterness of Lord Inverawe's reproaches, and represented him only as one who sorrowed without hope.

"God will not forsake us, dearest father," said she at last, calling up her smile of holy resignation to give expression to her words. "Julian's innocence seems to us so indisputable, that I cannot believe but that it must be equally clear to all the world besides. And if it were otherwise, my father, the God with whom nothing is impossible will bring light out of our darkness. You know in whom you have believed, dear father, and though it be his will to work inscrutably, yet he will in all things repay our trust in him."

How fair and sweet a thing is the trust of a devoted woman! In a man's most steadfast faith there is, of necessity, a desire to see behind the curtain—a longing of reason to trace out the means whereby the expected good is to be attained—a mingling of the efforts of human intellect even with the persuasion of its insufficiency. But in a woman's faith there is no blemish upon the fervour of its dependance—there is no restless working of reason after knowledge; but the true heart lays itself down in the very path of the thunderbolt, and seeks not any proof of its safety beyond what its own trust in the hand which shelters can supply.

Katherine's religion was not of a nature to desert her in this extremity; and after this day of anguish she sought her pillow with a soul hallowed by the blessings of those whom she lived only to serve, and tranquillized by the security of its trust in God. And they alone, upon whom His heavy chastisements have wrought their appointed work, can tell how blessed is the influence of affliction when it brings us nearer and nearer to the hand that chastens.

It had been decided between Katherine and her father, before they parted, as inevitable that Mrs. Randolph should be informed of the situation of her son. Now that their hope of sparing her the worst part of the disclosure was put to flight, it had become more than ever necessary to prepare her mind for the contemplation of Julian's terrible position. But Mrs. Randolph proved an unapt scholar in jurisprudence; and the intelligence, instead of proving the shock to her feeble nerves which Katherine and her father anticipated, carried few ideas to her mind beyond surprise and indignation that Julian's declaration of his own innocence should weigh as nothing in the eyes of the law he had outraged. Her strongest feelings on the subject seemed to be that of satisfaction in the knowledge that he was so near her; and the greatest difficulty against which Katherine had to contend was in dissuading her from commanding that he should visit his home, and yield her the happiness of seeing him on the instant.

In vain did both daughter and husband assure

her that it was at the most imminent hazard alone that he could leave the cave; she ended by declaring that, if they refused Julian liberty to come to her, she would go to him at every risk, and in the face of every danger.

Mr. Randolph, quite aware that she would fulfil her threat without hesitation, was obliged to take upon himself the gratification of her wishes, in the manner in which it could be done with least peril to the interests of all; and, accordingly, when he went to pay his own sad visit to the lonely refugee, he desired him, when the night was at the darkest, to fold his plaid about him, and come to the low window of the dining-room, through which Katherine would admit him; and he might spend half an hour with his mother, and then return as he came, without being seen even by the servants of the household.

Katherine made one visit more to the cave than she intended, for the purpose of enforcing her numerous injunctions of care and caution, and then returned home to wait the hour of his approach in fear and sorrow.

The night, according to the half-hopeful, half-fearful prognostic of Katherine, set in in pitchy darkness, and about the usual tea-hour of the manse the rain began to fall heavily; yet Mrs. Randolph persisted in expecting her son, and silenced Katherine with the utmost impatience when she expressed a different opinion.

Katherine stirred the fire, and drew down the curtains, and arranged the room to the beau ideal of domestic comfort; and when she looked out upon the murky security of the night, and calculated the slender risk which would be run by such an adventure on the part of Julian, she began to tell her heart that her mother was right, and he would certainly come—and yet the thought made her tremble. She could not bear that Julian should come skulking to his home in hiding and secrecy, while the household, that would have rung with joy at the sound of his approach, was kept in ignorance of it. Her father, too, looked anxious, and asked her so often if she believed that he meant to come, that she felt how much of his comfort depended upon the certainty that he would not.

Seven—half past seven—eight—all passed without any appearance of Julian; and when half an hour more had elapsed, Mrs. Randolph began to fidget, and, in the exact same proportion, Mr. Randolph became composed, and asked for his tea with a self-gratulatory tone that seemed to indicate that his fears were almost at an end. The probability of Julian's appearance was so very slight now, that Katherine felt half disposed to pity her mother for the disappointment, and delayed the making of tea as long as possible, as if to render her sympathy apparent.

The cups were all poured out at last, however, and their fragrant steam was perfuming the air, when the party was suddenly disturbed by a loud ringing at the door-bell. The circumstance was a sufficiently unusual one at this hour of the day to make its result a matter of some curiosity. Katherine whispered to her heart that it was Keith, and Mr. Randolph turned his face towards the door in an attitude of expectation.

Heavy steps crossed the passage and turned into the little library, and a moment after the servant announced the visit of a gentleman to Mr. Randolph on business of importance.

A slight bustle in the hall attracted Katherine's attention, and almost unconsciously she

followed her father to the door, and pressed out into the lobby. A group of men, in strange, rough-looking coats, were huddled near the door, and their hats occupied the lobby table. One single glance was sufficient to convince her that they were officers of justice; and with extreme difficulty repressing a shriek, she retreated into the dining-room and shut the door.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Will you be ruled by me?
Ay—so you will not o'errule me to a peace."

SHAKESPEARE.

KATHERINE did not lose her presence of mind for a moment. To doubt the errand of these strange men to her father's house was impossible. She knew that they were in pursuit of Julian; and in the same moment became aware, that to make known the real nature of their mission to her mother would have gone far to kill her on the spot, or, at the least, to produce such a scene as it was absolutely necessary to avoid.

Accordingly, Katherine returned to her place by the table, that she might collect her thoughts, and decide what was best to be done in such an emergency. The sickness of terror was over her heart, and her limbs trembled till her very fingers refused to perform their office, and her face betrayed the pallor of mortal extremity. And yet, when her mother spoke to her in a quiet tone, and inquired if she had seen the stranger, she answered, with perfect self-possession, that she had not, and hoped that he would not detain her father till his tea should have turned cold.

In a few minutes her brain was cleared from the mist that had come over it, and she began to look steadfastly upon the exigencies of the moment. It would be impossible to conceal the truth from her mother long; since, doubtless, if the person with whom her father was engaged were, as she concluded, an officer of justice, he would consider it his duty to search the house for the fugitive; and the prospect of revealing such an intention to her mother, or of having it conducted in her presence, was one from which her spirit shrank in agony.

This prospect, however, wretched as it appeared, was not the worst evil that threatened; for Katherine remembered that it was still just possible that the next moment might see Julian himself leap through the window of the dining-room into the very arms, as it were, of his pursuers. The anticipation made her half frantic, and her first impulse was to lift the window herself, and flee through it to intercept and forbid him. This would have been, however, not only to betray the worst at once, and under the most alarming circumstance, to her mother, but to increase the hazard of Julian's capture, the secret of whose very hiding-place his mother's agitation would be sure to betray.

Such a shock of evils! wellnigh unsettled poor Katherine's reason altogether. Ah, Keith! where were you at this moment, when she whom you loved best would have given years of life for your presence. She dared not think of her own responsibilities, and yet every instant, as it passed, seemed but adding to their weight.

Mrs. Randolph went on talking in her usual strain, wondering at Julian's absence, and sipping her tea, and enjoying it with a placidity

that acted upon poor Katherine's excited nerves like oil upon the flames.

Minute after minute passed, and the terrible *tit-for-tat* was still undisturbed, while from the hall no index came that the parties engaged in conference there were growing weary of their vigil. At last Mrs. Randolph released her daughter from the table, and wondered whether it was worth while to keep the tea-things for her husband and Julian.

The excuse was seized upon immediately, and Katherine sprang to the window, and passed behind the curtain to look out. It was still as dark as ever, and the rain descended in a straight, dreary plash, without a breeze to sway it. "Oh! surely Julian would not come now."

The outer door was ajar, and the light was streaming through it; it seemed as if the men were watching outside of the house. Katherine's heart died within her. It was impossible now that even her wild flight could be attempted; it would but be giving a clew to the real hiding-place.

"Ah!" thought the excited girl, "surely God, in his infinite mercy, will prevent Julian from coming—surely there cannot be such an agony as this in store for us—O God! preserve him! sustain him!" and she wrung her hands in passionate supplication.

She had scarcely breathed these words, when a slight rustling among the shrubs, like the softest movement of the wind, caught her ear; the next instant Julian's wet plaid flapped against her cheek, and his hand was on the window ledge.

"Brother! Julian!" said she, in a whisper, that seemed to contain her very soul; "ah! dear, dear Julian, do not come in—flee! flee back again to the cave—they are here, seeking you; go—go, dear Julian, or it will kill our mother, and she is here beside me, and knows nothing of these terrible men. Julian—ah! if you wish to save us all from madness, fly back again to the cave."

"And my father," said Julian, in the same concentrated whisper, yet with perfect calmness and self-possession, "where is he?"

"In the study, talking to the officer who has brought these men. Ah! why do you stand there? If you do not wish to see me drop dead at your feet, go."

"Sweet Katherine, be calm, and let me pass," returned Julian, in a tone of gentle firmness, as of one who has taken a righteous resolution; "let me pass, and trust yourself and me in the hands of God and his justice. I will not let my father be pushed to the extremity by the cross-questioning of this man. Let me pass, and trust to me for calming and reassuring our mother."

Katherine's farther remonstrances were deferred by the approach of Mrs. Randolph, who had heard a rustle among the curtains, and started forward to discover its cause. In a moment Julian was in the room, clasped in the joyful embrace of his mother, and Katherine wringing her hands in agony beside them.

"Oh! mother, mother, let him go!" said the poor girl, forgetting all peril to her mother in the heavier danger that menaced Julian; "let him go, dearest mother; drive him from you; command him back again to the cave; you know not the deadly peril he is in, even in your arms. Those terrible men—oh, mother, mother, they are his pursuers, and I feared to tell you of it before; send him from you, or they will tear him away by force."

"They shall not—they shall not!" said Mrs. Randolph, clasping him yet closer, and unmoved by the eager appeal of Katherine. "Where should he be so safe as on his mother's bosom? They shall not touch a hair of his head."

And she raised her voice with a violence that seemed half hysterical.

"Mother—Katherine—listen to me," said Julian, in a calm, low, and impressive tone; "let me pass to my father's room; let me give myself up to the hands of these men, and wait you patiently for the issue. I pledge you my honour, my most sacred word, before Heaven, that I believe you have nothing to fear. Answer your own heart, dear Katherine; does your fine and true principle not inform you that this will be a better course for a man of integrity to pursue, than the mean flight of a coward before a charge which he understands not? Let me pass, I implore you, on the way which I believe, before God, leads me to my duty. Dearest mother, command yourself—Katherine, let me pass."

Katherine flung herself at his feet, and grasped his knees half frantically.

"Wait—wait—wait till our father comes to guide you—hide yourself, I implore you, if it be only till he comes! Oh! Julian, do not kill us with this boldness—see, look at our mother!"

Mrs. Randolph was in violent hysterics upon the sofa, Julian was gazing from one to the other like a man stupefied, and Katherine was kneeling at his feet, when the door opened, and Keith Chisholm, like an apparition from the skies, walked into the apartment.

CHAPTER XL.

"This affliction hath one taste as sweet
As any cordial comfort."

SHAKESPEARE.

No messenger from Heaven could have been more welcome in the sight of Katherine than the presence of her best friend at this moment of despair. She sprang towards him with a cry of joy, and in an instant his arm was round her, and his calm and manly tones speaking comfort and encouragement.

Keith told her that he had been closeted for half an hour with her father and the person to whom the order for Julian's arrest had been committed; soothed her by assurances that even this stranger took in her brother's situation a lively and engrossing interest; and finished by detailing to her the opinion which he had expressed of what course it would be most desirable to follow.

The stranger, without directly inquiring the place of Julian's retreat, had declared his conviction that the safest and wisest, as well as the most honourable plan, would be that Julian should voluntarily surrender himself a prisoner.

Katherine's look of despair and Julian's passionate appeal interrupted the speaker as he pronounced these words, and Mrs. Randolph's convulsive sobbing redoubled its vehemence.

"Dearest Katherine," said Keith, with his persuasive gentleness of tone and manner, "listen to me for a moment, and then exercise your own excellent judgment in this matter. You know, upon the authority of Lord Inverawe himself, at whose instigation this keen pursuit has been instituted, that no pains will be spared,

no exertions withheld, to make it successful; and the direction which the pursuers have this night taken may in itself be sufficient to convince you that such vigilance cannot long be evaded. You may look upon it as inevitable, dearest Katherine, that Julian will sooner or later be taken, whether he be suffered to escape for the present or not: then think whether it will tell most to the honour and integrity of the fugitive, to his own sense of innocence, to the views which he entertains of his own grounds of defence, that he surrender himself at once, that he put himself into the hands of justice, having fled no farther from it than to the shelter of his father's roof; or, on the other hand, that he skulk forth again, like a culprit and a vagabond, seeking to hide himself in the darkness from the eyes of those whom he dares not to confront. Do not fear for the issue, dearest Katherine," continued Keith; "there is much and weighty evidence in his favour. The esteem in which Julian was held, and to which every officer of his corps is able and eager to testify, the circumstances of the quarrel in which all these misfortunes originated, and, above all, the dying assurances of Major Moira that the blame was his alone—all these things are in his favour: whereas, if you persist in detaining Julian, if he is won over, dearest Katherine, by your entreaties to play the fugitive any longer, it is certain that his reputation will be the sacrifice—nay, that in another week your brother will be an outlaw."

Katherine became deadly pale, and hung heavily on the arm of Keith as he uttered these words, in a tone which was too low to reach the ear of Mrs. Randolph. Julian followed up the impression they had made by a torrent of eager remonstrances.

"Support our mother, dearest Katherine," said he, as he appeared to succeed in convincing her. "Lead her up stairs, and while her from the contemplation of these violent scenes; your influence over her is the strongest always; teach her to look upon this matter as we do, and let me, in the mean time, join my father."

Katherine burst into a fresh flood of tears at the last sentence.

"And will you go before I can see you again? Must I not even say farewell?" said she, in a tone of reproach. "And will you go alone with these terrible men? Oh, Keith, must he put himself in their hands alone?"

"I shall not part from him for a moment until I bring him back to you in happiness," said Keith, in a reassuring tone. "Trust me, dearest Katherine, he is scarcely an object of deeper interest to yourself than he is to me; and I give my sacred promise that, if the efforts of man can bring him back to Killurie in safety, he shall return. Do not look so distrustfully on the future; all will be well yet, and in less time than you now believe possible I shall see you laughing over the fears of this moment."

"Promise me," said Katherine, "that he will not go before I return—promise, dear Keith, that you will not suffer him to leave the house for half an hour. Surely they cannot object to this."

Keith promised, and Katherine, with his assistance, supported her mother up stairs to bed; where, exhausted by the violence of her previous agitation, she very soon sank into a state of quietence.

Poor Katherine found the society of her own thoughts, during that brief vigil by her mother's

bedside, sufficiently engrossing to put to rest even her impatience for its close. How terrible, how agonizing, seemed to her this fatal and uncertain parting! Under circumstances of what fearful hazard was she bidding a farewell which had never yet been spoken without pain, but which had taught her no feeling in the past that would not be looked upon as little less than transport in comparison with those which were breaking her heart at this moment. Oh, if she could but follow him through all his perils! If she could be ever present with him to soothe, to comfort, and support! If she could but choose between the duties that bound her to her home and the precious privilege of accompanying Julian—of watching his fate as it unravelled itself—of being ever near him to share or to avert the dangers as they approached! Oh, how much less terrible would her fate appear if she were only privileged to attend upon the beloved one in his adversity!

Is there any eye which traces these lines that has not wept over the deprivation of the same imaginary blessing? Is there any heart which has not felt as if its very presence would benefit the sufferer whom it was denied the power to succour—that has not magnified the affliction which it was debarred from witnessing, till the very anguish of beholding the beloved one in pain has been envied and pined for as the dearest boon of Heaven?

True, it is vain, and profitless, and heart-rending to gaze upon the tears and sufferings of those we love, till the view goes far to sap the foundation of our own being. Yet who would not prefer an ordeal of sympathy like this to the anxious, miserable self-torture of the solitude which excludes it?

But deeply as her own peace of mind was concerned in the desire to accompany Julian, it was not on this that Katherine could for a moment be accused of brooding. The loneliness of Julian—the long hours which he must pass in solitude while Keith was absent for the purpose, it might be, of forwarding the captive's interests; and then the cheerless discomforts of a prison, which lacked even the smile of affection to soften its ragged aspect—these were the images that most oppressed her. Oh, who could tend and watch over Julian like his twin sister? Even Keith knew nothing of the tenderness with which she would cheer the hours of his captivity till they became hours of peace and joy: even Keith, with all his watchful kindness, could not guess the warm devotion of a sister's love. How should he? It was by great acts of brave and active service that Keith's devotion was to benefit him. Who, then, would have leisure to watch, and tend, and solace him? Oh, could she but accomplish this engrossing wish, and go with him to his prison!

Katherine felt half her sorrows melt away at the possibility. She looked at her mother—her sleep was sound and tranquil. "She will not sink beneath her burden of anxiety, and dear Marion's care will be as sleepless as my own," was her reflection. "My dear father cannot go with Julian," she pursued; "it is no service for his pure piety, that which leads him to follow his own child to a jail. Besides, he cannot leave Killurie for an indefinite period, such as this journey demands; and Julian must not be left without one member of his family. Oh, God will grant my prayer even yet, and I shall go with him."

A few moments of farther reflection confirmed her resolution of at least endeavouring to possess herself of this blessing so dearly coveted; and, with a beating heart, and a cheek in which the blood curdled with anxiety, she descended to her father's room. She opened the door very gently, and entered without disturbing the occupant, who was seated alone beside the table.

Katherine watched him for a moment in silence, and her heart bled over the intense agony which was indicated by the paleness of his forehead, and the compression of the long, thin fingers that covered his eyes. He heard her troubled breathings at last, and looked up to her with a smile that struggled mournfully through the anguish which his features expressed.

"You are welcome, my Katherine," said he, in a low tone; "I was wishing for you this moment. Come to me, my child, and tell me that the anxieties of the last few days have not left you without energy to struggle yet farther. Tell me, dearest Katherine, have you strength to undertake one more—the heaviest and most grievous to be borne of all your labours of love in Julian's cause?

"Oh, father, only tell me how I can serve either him or you," said Katherine, fervently; "only show me in what way my feeble powers can avail, and the opportunity of using them will be the dearest boon you can bestow."

"God bless my child!" answered Mr. Randolph; "I knew that her will at least was not to be overtaxed—but stay, dear Katherine, until you have heard the nature of the new call upon you before you promise to answer it. The act of heroism which I am going to require at your hands will entail duties of a nature utterly revolting to you—will introduce you to scenes which, of all others, are calculated to wound and shock you."

The good man's voice shook as if it wrung his heart to enumerate the sacrifices he was about to exact.

"A long series of trials is all that I can promise you, my child, beyond your brother's gratitude and your father's tenderest blessing. I am going to beg that you go with Julian to London. I am prevented accompanying him by the necessity of going elsewhere in search of evidence that is wanting. But your mother is to be left in the charge of Marion and Miss Forbes; and you, my devoted child, are required to accompany your brother to jail."

Katherine knelt at her father's knees, and thanked Heaven and him for the proposal in a burst of happy tears. It never occurred to her to inquire for what purpose such an arrangement was made: she looked on the proposal in no other light than as a piece of tender indulgence to herself; and the step with which she reascended the stairs, to prepare for her sudden journey, seemed winged with gossamer in comparison with the leaden pace at which she had so lately traversed the same ground before.

CHAPTER XLI.

"Regions of sorrow, daleful shades, where peace And rest can never come."—MILTON.

Few people, whom neither experience nor observation has enlightened upon the subject, could be made to comprehend the feelings with which one who has no acquaintance with the

haunts of men, beyond a village or a country town, enters the "mighty heart" of the metropolis. The excitement produced by our introduction to the most sublime scenes of nature is a feeling which, coming from precisely the same source with that which I would describe, may yet serve, in some degree, to illustrate the latter by the effect of contrast; for, though the sense of greatness, the impression of power, and might, and grandeur, be nearly the same in both cases, the heavenly composure and solemnity which follows our mental assent to the poet's truism, that "God made the country," bears no analogy to the utter bewilderment of awe, and something resembling terror, with which we ask ourselves "whether man made the town?" And although the exquisite beauty and magnificence of the architectural scenery of London raise our first feeling of simple wonder into one of enthusiastic enjoyment, yet the very distraction of our mind, the restless avidity with which we gaze and wonder at each new marvel as it presents itself, proves our happiness to be the production of artificial causes, from the intoxication which accompanies it.

Poor Katherine had little opportunity for analyzing the effect of scenes like these on her own imagination. The peculiar circumstances under which their journey was performed having carried the little party first to Brighton, and from Brighton to London, Katherine entered the capital by its noblest approach, and gazed with admiration, despite of the anxieties which weighed her down, upon the rows of palaces which in that direction bid the stranger welcome; and as she looked out upon the carved and fretted pillars, and the graceful designing of the squares and terraces, which lay silvered by the halo of a quiet moonlight, she was conscious of a swelling at the heart as she contrasted it with the terrible gloom of her own destination.

The gaslights were almost obscured in the glory of the moonbeams; but here and there a shutter was ajar, as if the inhabitants had been tempted to turn towards the spiritual night, even though it lay only upon paved streets; while the shading of gauze draperies was sufficient to hide from Katherine's eyes such groups as spoke to her heart with a sweet tale of the merry homes of England.

Presently the roar of human life waxed louder, however, and the patrician dignity of the parks gave place to haunts of strife and business. Piccadilly was left behind, Regent-street traversed rapidly, and by Oxford-street and Holborn the carriage held its way, as it would have done had lighter and gayer hearts throbbed within it.

Amid such a scene, so strange, so stirring, so unlike all to which, from her infancy, she had been accustomed, Katherine became utterly bewildered. The masses of human beings that swept along confused her by their frequency; the lights streaming across the broad way altogether overpowered her, and she leaned back in her seat, scarcely more disturbed on her brother's account than surprised by the novelty of her own situation.

At length a remark of Keith's made Katherine's heart beat, and her eyes strain their powers of vision, while she leaned forward to watch for the gloomy termination to their journey. She did not ask a question; the atmosphere of the place—the very aspect of the street, told her that something terrible was near at hand.

She made her observations in silence upon all

that met her eye. There was an air of meanness, and an appearance of squalor even in the life and bustle of the scene, which spoke of the proximity of vice and misery; and as Katherine turned round to gaze at the beloved features which were soon to find home in this abode of sin, she could with great difficulty restrain the tears with which her heart seemed bursting.

"Are you quite resolved to go directly to the prison, dearest Katherine?" said Keith; "will you not yet be persuaded to let us go there, at least for the first time, without you?"

Katherine steadied her voice, and then answered cheerfully,

"I am quite resolved, dear Keith; do not plague yourself with trying to dissuade me."

She cast her eyes once more without, and a long, high wall, blackened by the smoke of many generations, and extending the whole length of the street, caught her gaze. It was a dismal object, and saddened even the gloomy purlieus of Newgate-street with its huge and massive proportions. Not for a moment could its uses be mistaken, and Katherine recognised the prison of her brother with a sickness of the heart which could only be understood by one as little used to such visions as herself, and, turning involuntarily towards Julian, tightened the clasp with which she already held his arm, as if to assure herself that even this fell barrier could not separate them.

The carriage stopped, and Katherine was lifted down by her betrothed, pale, and cold, and rigid, after Julian and his captor had alighted. It appeared that the arrival of the prisoner had occasioned an unusual degree of excitement and interest among the populace; for a group of inquisitive faces peered around her as Katherine stepped on the pavement, and rude words of idle comment grated harshly in her ears as she passed along.

The iron-bound door of Newgate—that gate which seems to bear, in characters of its own, the terrible motto of Dante—clanged drearily after the group as they entered, and for the first time Katherine felt that Julian stood a member of that community which comprehends the refuse of human kind.

She gazed fearfully around her upon a strong vaulted hall, hung with keys, fetters, and handcuffs of every size and description; and while all the turnkeys in the house seemed to peep in to look at the gentleman captive, she had time to remark the perfect self-possession and coolness of Julian's bearing.

A respectable-looking man begged to know whether the lady would choose to enter the ward, and being answered in the affirmative, he took out his keys, and begged the party to follow him. Katherine shuddered violently as she passed the threshold of the guard-room, and beheld the row of plaster casts of the heads of malefactors which are ranged over it. The chill of death seemed to pass through her veins, and she felt, in its fullest intensity, that superstitious boding of evil which is apt to come over us on our first acquaintance with a place of confinement. Her senses seemed painfully alive to every impression during her onward progress; and as she gazed from side to side upon rude and naked walls, she confessed to herself that the very air she breathed carried to her mind images of vice and misery.

Stairs were ascended and galleries traversed, till Katherine began to think herself in a labyr-

inch to which there was no clew. At last, however, they stopped before a strong door, and the turnkey, having unlocked it, ushered them into a large room, furnished with one or two long benches, and a dozen of rude wooden bedsteads, placed one over another, like the berths of a ship's cabin, on each of which was laid a rug and a piece of carpet for the accommodation of its occupant.

Those who declare that the most rigid order and cleanliness, even when accompanied by the usually cheerful influence of a good fire, are incompatible with the dreariest atmosphere of squalor and desolation, have never visited a cell or even a ward of Newgate. Katherine stepped across the threshold, and looked round her with a swelling heart; but her observations were disturbed by the moving of a dark object at the farther end, and in a moment she retreated to the side of Keith, and entreated of him to inquire whether they could be alone.

"We have only one prisoner in this ward, ma'am," said the man, in reply to her audible whisper; "this is where they generally remain the first night, and as it is large, and has the advantage of a fire, I thought the gentleman would prefer being here."

"I suppose I can have an apartment to myself, if I desire it," said Julian, with that winning tone and address which invariably found its way to all hearts.

"Certainly, sir," answered the jailer; "the cell has been prepared for you these two days."

Katherine shivered, and Julian smiled at these words, while Keith asked a few questions in an under tone regarding the accommodation afforded by the cell; and when they were answered, he proposed that, if Julian preferred the solitude of his own apartment to the warmth of this, they should all adjourn thither immediately.

Again the interminable passages were traversed, and again the endless flights of stairs descended, until the group were on their way through a vaulted passage, into which the moon-beams could not enter, and which was lighted by day as well as by night with lamps. This, however, brought them once more into day, or, rather, to moonlight; and by-and-by they stopped before one of a row of small doors upon the ground, the characters of which were distinguishable by the numerous nails and clasps of iron with which each of them was secured.

A cold and desolate chill fell upon Katherine as this time she followed her brother and Keith into the condemned cell, where, as a "gentleman," Julian had been *privileged* to take up his abode. It was an apartment measuring about ten feet by six, and contained an iron bedstead, formed of one solid sheet, except where, by way of luxury, it was perforated at intervals of an inch or two; a rug like those in the ward which they had first entered, and in one corner a bracket, on which were laid a Bible and Prayer-book. The floor was of rough flags, the walls of naked brick, and the window placed far above the heads of the tallest among the group; the moonlight quivering through it, and making the desolation of the apartment still more desolate.

Katherine uttered not a word while Keith and Julian were making their survey of the cheerless domicil. She could not have spoken, for the long-suppressed tears were struggling to escape; her bosom heaved as if she would have been suffocated, and her cheek was so pale that the very moonlight could not make it paler.

"How thankful I am to be alone!" said Julian, turning cheerfully towards her; "you will be able to leave me with an easy mind, dearest Katherine. And now that you have seen me fairly settled, I must dismiss you and Keith immediately, for I have not forgotten that he has still a lodging to provide for you."

"I fear you will be cold, dear Julian," said she, in a very low and constrained tone, as if she feared to lose her composure for a moment.

"Cold!" repeated he, laughing, with an effort to turn the tide of her spirits by the broadest evidence of his own serenity; "no, no, I am only sleepy, and after you and Keith are gone, I shall not be half an hour longer awake. This is not a sign of cold, is it?" and he pressed her hands with his till she felt reassured by their healthy warmth.

Her own were as cold and as white as marble, and Julian's anxiety awoke at their touch.

"My poor Katherine! no wonder that you suspect me of cold, when your own circulation seems to have stopped altogether. I must not keep you here any longer. Keith, take care of her, I entreat, and find out some comfortable rooms for her as soon as you can: and now good-night to you both."

"You will allow Keith to return," said Katherine.

"No, indeed, my dear sister," returned he; "I shall sleep soundly, and be quite independent of all your cares for many hours to come. Do not remain with me now. To-morrow I shall look for you as for the dawn, but now good-night."

A few words more of kindness and good augury passed between him and Keith, and, after a convulsive embrace from Katherine, Keith hurried her away, and Julian was left in his solitude.

CHAPTER XLII.

"There is a comfort in the strength of love:
'Twill make a thing endurable which else
Would overset the brain or break the heart."

WORDSWORTH.

How sorely did this night's experience tax the courage and the self-command with which poor Katherine had resolved on meeting every trial which she might be called upon to encounter. How terrible was the first realization of that which she had anticipated, with an apprehension so vague and undefined! She had seen Julian the inmate of a prison; she had looked upon the fleet foot and the eagle eye, for which the glorious liberty of their own mountains seemed the only befitting sphere, condemned to the sordid restraint, whence every gratification of which his nature was susceptible seemed excluded; she had seen one, from contact with whose noble nature all base or evil things had once seemed of their own accord to fall away, herding with the offscourings of the human race, stalled among felons and thieves, and fettered by bonds, which ought to have been to him like the green withes of the giant.

Katherine felt that the malice of Fate had wellnigh done its worst; that there was but one shaft more that could carry a bitterer poison still; and in her brokenness of heart she well-nigh overlooked the disparity between Julian's degradation and Julian's death. She leaned her head upon the shoulder of Keith as they sat

together in the carriage, and wept out her long-restrained flood of tears in speechless desolation. The convulsion of her anguish, which the attempt to control it before had occasioned, was past, and she uttered no sound to express what was going on within. She was utterly subdued, and there was a meek and patient lowliness in her mood of suffering, that wrung the heart of her betrothed with a deeper sympathy than would have attended the most noisy lamentations.

"My own dear Katherine," said he, in a cheering tone, "do not be so sad, nor let our fate put on such a mournful aspect as it now wears in your eyes. I know that you are bowed down with the trial of seeing Julian in such a resting-place; but only strip away the imaginary portion of the evil, and then say if his present couch be not in all respects as good as that to which you consigned him so cheerfully in Clach-na-hard. Nay, is he not better sheltered from every species of danger than he was there?"

"Ah, Keith," answered she, in a low, heart-broken tone, "does it make no difference that then the haunts of his childhood were his prison, and I myself his jailer?"

"Well, dearest," answered he, smiling, "and so you will be to-morrow, not only his jailer, but his fellow-captive, if you will. Only consider, dearest Katherine, how trifling, to a man of Julian's breeding, after all, is the inconvenience of a hard bed and an uncarpeted chamber; for, if you will but think, you will find that this is all."

"All!" repeated she; "do you think it nothing, then, to breathe the same atmosphere with convicts and felons; to take your place in the ranks of those whom all honest men hold in abhorrence; to obey the laws which were framed only for the degraded and reprobate? Ah, Keith, do you rate this at nothing?"

"My dearest Katherine," said Keith, earnestly, "you forget that Julian, though with them, is not of them. Do you think that a few days' or weeks' sojourn in such a neighbourhood can cast the shadow of a cloud on the mind of Julian, either in reality, or in the estimation of any human being, or do you suppose that he will leave his prison with a soil even upon his reputation? You forget that the mere act of freeing him from confinement restores its most untailed brightness to his honour as well as his liberty. Let me persuade you to follow my example, and turn your mind, and hopes, and energies to that moment, and let the present flit away unnoticed."

"And yet I cannot forget that, should God in his mercy grant us this at last, a long space must intervene in which poor Julian will sigh like a caged bird for the freedom that is so dear to him—in which he will still be subjected to all the pollution of his present abode, where the green earth, and even the clear skies of heaven, will be to him a forbidden enjoyment."

"Nay, nay, if you are so wayward as this, I will comfort you no more," answered Keith, in a lively tone. "Will not Katherine be with him? and can any prison be utterly cheerless into which her presence comes? You will be at liberty to remain with him from dawn till sunset. Will the longing for earth and sky be unendurable to you, my Katherine?"

"To me! Oh no, no," answered she, simply. "Julian's prison will be far dearer to me than the fairest scenes in England."

"And why do you charge him with an impatience of restraint which is a stranger to yourself, dear Katherine?" asked Keith, smiling. "I am very sure that the loss of his liberty would be the last subject of your regret if Julian were confined to a sick-room. Let me persuade you to look upon his captivity as if it were the effect of a lingering illness, of which the termination is of more consequence than any trifling circumstances of the detail, and where, in the opinion of the most skilful physicians, no alarming symptom prevails. Bring yourself to this persuasion, sweet Katherine, and you will soon find of how very little consequence the situation of his chamber will appear in your eyes."

Keith's reasoning, if not quite conclusive, at least availed in removing the most painful evidences of Katherine's distress; and when, by great good fortune, his first attempt was successful in procuring for her a comfortable and respectable lodging, at a convenient distance from the prison, he was able to leave her with a mind relieved of its heaviest weight of anxiety on her account.

"This is not the sort of residence most consistent with the pretensions of a great heiress on her first arrival in London, dear Katherine," said he, gayly, as he looked round upon the small but neat apartment into which they had been shown, "and I wish, with all my heart, that the age were chivalrous enough to admit of my sleeping behind your chamber-door. But I think I can leave you, without much anxiety, to the care of our good landlady, and with the certainty of being with you almost by daydawn to-morrow. Shall we breakfast together?"

"If you please, we will both breakfast with Julian," answered Katherine, "if you will take me to him so early, dear Keith." And with this arrangement they parted.

Katherine had resisted all her friends' persuasions to bring an attendant with her. She felt that she would be more mistress of her own actions if she were alone, and accordingly, in her friendless and lonely situation, she felt as if it were a direct interposition of Providence in her behalf that had led her to seek a lodging in the house of a quiet and kindly old widow, a native of her own beloved Scotland, and one to whose assistance she could feel no repugnance in applying. It was a novel situation for one so young and simple as Katherine—a situation which but a few months ago she would have contemplated with horror; yet so entirely was her mind engrossed by the one deep anxiety for Julian, that she laid her head on the pillow without once remembering that she might herself be an object of compassion.

When Keith arrived at his hotel, even the image of Katherine, in her unprotected solitude, was banished from his mind, that its energies might be unreservedly turned to the affairs of Julian; and two or three hours were devoted to reflection before he slept, in order that his plans for the proceedings of the morrow might be fully arranged.

The first thing to be done was to secure a counsel for Julian, and, having submitted the evidence to him, to gather from his opinion the probabilities in favour of the prisoner; for Keith felt how vital an influence the declaration of that opinion must exercise over the health and peace of those dearest to him. He summed up, for the hundredth time, the whole amount of evidence in Julian's favour. First, the well-known

enmity entertained by the deceased against Julian, and the repeated instances of its effects, to which many voices would be eager to testify. Secondly, the absolute respect and obedience tendered by Julian to Major Moira as a superior officer, and the invariable civility shown him as an acquaintance; the baseness of Major Moira's conduct in the dispute which preceded the duel, and the perfect establishment of the fact that Julian retained no malice or revengeful feeling whatever against his superior after the latter had left the room. Thirdly, that the challenge came from the deceased, and that the prisoner took his ground with the firmest resolution not to fire his pistol, except in the air.

All this, and more, did Keith place in array before his mind at least fifty times ere he lay down, and as often was he obliged to confess that the whole might be outbalanced by the simple fact of Major Moira's death. He dared not contemplate the issue; for the only link in the chain of evidence which he felt to be of any value was missing—namely, the testimony of the man into whose house the deceased had been carried, and in whose hearing his last declaration of Julian's innocence had been uttered; and he had disappeared so mysteriously, that little doubt remained upon the minds of Julian's friends but that Lord Inverawe had bribed him to leave the country.

Whether this man's removal was attributable to Lord Inverawe alone, Keith had no means of ascertaining; but some latent, half-defined suspicion of the agency of Lord de Mar had induced him to second the proposal of Katherine's journey to town, on purpose that communications might be made and received through her, which could not, with equal hopes of success, be undertaken by himself. He well remembered the extinction of Julian's hopes as a suitor to the Lady Ida; and his own particular impression of the state of the lady's feelings towards her young worshipper was such as to make him easily understand the anxiety of Lord de Mar to exclude the disinherited subaltern from all intercourse with his daughter.

Keith Chisholm's own experience of the ascendancy which might be obtained by *might over right*, taught him to regard, with infinite anxiety, the personal interest which Lord de Mar took in the success of Lord Inverawe's prosecution, and to wish that the necessity for his own presence in London were not too pressing to admit of his joining in the search which Mr. Randolph was making after the lost evidence. The De Mares were still at Brighton, which he regretted, since Katherine's appeal to the justice and humanity of her brother's commanding officer could at least do no harm, and might be kept as a resource against the last extremity.

A thousand times did Keith regret the unfortunate absence of General Forbes, the brave, and generous, and powerful friend of Julian. He remembered some hints uttered by Mr. Randolph in reference to the general's influence with Lord de Mar, and he could not help feeling better pleased that General Forbes should meet him on equal terms, than that his gentle Katherine should for a moment put herself in the power of such a man. On this subject, however, he was sanguine—General Forbes would surely make his appearance before the trial came on, since his daughter had sent letters to await him at all the points in England and Scotland which she thought it probable he might visit on his way

home; and, even without such precaution, the good old general was not likely to be long absent from his young friend after having once possessed himself of the facts which every newspaper in Britain had made public.

Such busy thoughts were not calculated to act upon Keith as an opiate, and it was not till the stars had become pale, and the gray of the morning had dappled the sky, that he closed his eyes after his day of exertion, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Bellario, a learned doctor."

SHAKESPEARE.

EARLY as it was when Chisholm entered the apartments of his betrothed, Katherine was already equipped for her walk to the prison, and eagerly expecting the arrival of her escort. Keith's anxious glance at her face was repaid by one of the gentlest smiles of former days, and a heavy weight seemed lifted from his heart by the change which a night of sound sleep had wrought upon her. She was still as pale as marble, but there was no painful contraction of mental anguish upon her forehead, and the gleam of former cheerfulness was in her eyes, although subdued and chastened by recent suffering.

The moments spent in their walk were filled up by confidential details on the part of Keith, and eager inquiries from Katherine as to the exact extent of liberty awarded to Julian and his visitors; and it was not till the terrible iron gate rolled backward to admit her, that the consciousness of her own repugnance seemed to revive.

There could be no incongruity more intense, more calculated to depress and sadden a looker-on, than Katherine's appearance in the receptacle of crime presented; and as Keith followed her through the vaulted passages that led to Julian's cell, he could have wept himself at the sacrilege which he had assisted in committing.

The first view of Julian was not calculated to turn aside the current of his thoughts, and for a moment or two he involuntarily lingered behind to watch the meeting of the brother and sister.

Julian was seated on the edge of his miserable bed, over the naked poverty of which he had thrown his gay tartan plaid, as if in expectation of his gentle visitor; and in the attitude in which he sat, with the bright rays of the morning sun slanting down from the grated window upon his head, and lighting up his noble features, and clear, pallid complexion, he looked so spiritual, so purely, beautifully good, and gentle, that Keith quelled the rising of his heart with the reflection that such natures as these made the atmosphere in which they had their existence.

Julian's extreme paleness, and a certain drooping in the carriage of his head, seemed, in Keith's eyes, to betoken that his night had not been quite so peaceful as could have been wished; and he inwardly thanked Heaven that even at such a cost as but a few moments before he had been grudging, Katherine had come to make him a home, even in his prison cell.

It was beautiful to see the start of joy with which Julian recognised his sister. The blood came faintly to his cheek as he sprang upon his feet, and when Katherine put her arms round his neck and kissed his brow, the large tears,

which no malice of fortune could have elicited, swelled over his eyes, and made them bright with the beam of love and gratitude.

Keith came forward with his warm salutation, and when the door was shut upon them, the very aspect of the cell seemed changed by the presence of kind faces. It was astonishing to observe the effect of Katherine's touch; the very atmosphere around her seemed to change its nature, and to breathe somewhat of comfort and elegance as she moved; for even the throwing down of her bonnet and shawl upon the little bracket banished the rude and unkindly air of the apartment; and by the time her orders, backed by the directions of Keith, had been successful in obtaining the means and appliances of a breakfast more comfortable than the routine of prisoner's fare allows, the little group seemed, in some degree, to have regained their usual bearing.

And now it was that Katherine's efforts sustained everybody. She seemed to have banished every cloud that had hung upon her the preceding night, and her cheerful tones, and looks of hope and tenderness, did more for Julian's pale cheek and heavy eye than any other recipe that could have been afforded him. A hundred projects were started for relieving the tedium of his confinement, and a hundred commissions intrusted to Keith, by which, through the instrumentality of the governor, his long hours of captivity were to be amused. For now, at length, Katherine began to feel the happiness of being rich, and again and again she thanked her considerate father for having, almost in her own despite, loaded her with money; and as books, chessboard, and drawing materials were severally ordered by her inventive kindness, the horrors of the cell, which she had first looked on as a dungeon, grew less and less in her eyes, till she began to declare that she anticipated little suffering to Julian beyond the anxiety of his position.

In this tranquil humour Keith quitted them, and took his way to another quarter of the great metropolis, in search of a certain friend of his family, who, although personally unknown to himself, occupied a place in public estimation, that rendered his acceptance of Julian's case a matter of great anxiety.

Passing down Farringdon-street, he turned to the right, and traversed the weary length of Fleet-street till he arrived at an arched passage close to Temple Bar, beneath the canopy of which he entered. It was a curious scene into which this movement introduced him. A new world seemed opened to his eyes; for, in all the arrangements of church and shop, and the ordinary habitations of man, he had passed in a moment beyond what might be called London.

Keith, in fact, was now in the Temple—and even as it meets the gaze of the stranger in the nineteenth century, the stronghold of the Crusaders is a strange place. He inquired at a barber's stall for the gentleman of whom he was in search, and, mounting a dark staircase, worn with the busy tread of many generations, stood before the door of a mean-looking set of chambers on the third floor.

There was a slovenly appearance in the un-washed stairs and the blackened knocker that induced him to suppose he had missed his way. He could not believe that a leading man at the bar, whose profession brought him in at least six thousand a year, would consent to pass the

mornings of his life in such a den; but the door was opened, and the affirmative which followed his question, "Is Mr. Cary at home?" settled all his doubts, and he was at once ushered into the presence of the lawyer.

The inner door was no sooner thrown open than the whole face of affairs underwent a change. A very handsome apartment lay before him, lighted by three large windows, and fitted up with much taste and expense. Oak bookcases, in beautiful Gothic designs, lined the walls, and elbow-chairs, of the same material and device, occupied the windows and the fireside; while a rich Turkey carpet and a massive bronze grate gave to the room an air of comfort widely at variance with the promise of its exterior.

The lawyer himself was seated beside a writing-table, absorbed in the study of a pile of open papers, which littered the table and the floor beside him. A single glance seemed to put Keith in possession of the man's character and disposition; and, as he marked the diminutive proportions of his frame, and the extreme nicety of his apparel, the image of that most faithful and exquisite of portraiture, the Counsellor Pleydell of Scott, rose visibly to his mind's eye.

Mr. Cary seemed upon the verge of fifty; yet the care bestowed upon his toilet might possibly have concealed a few additional footprints of time. He was a little man, with a keen black eye, and a quantity of grizzled hair, which was dressed with the utmost attention to taste and fashion. His mouth was flat and strongly compressed, very rarely revealing a set of teeth like ivory, which gave to his smile a gayety most infectious and prepossessing.

He was dressed, with the most exquisite neatness, in black, and had exchanged his coat for a flowered dressing-gown, which, despite its comfortable flow, seemed to fit him quite as accurately as the garment he had discarded. At a first glance, there was more certainty of the *petit maître* than anything else in his appearance; but he had no sooner lifted his deep black eyes to the countenance of his visiter, and opened his mouth to acknowledge his salutation, than Keith detected the majesty of intellect, and the ready self-possession of a great orator.

"Good-morning, sir," said Mr. Cary, giving Keith the salutation of an entire stranger. "Be good enough to sit down, and give me just five minutes' grace, while I finish an examination which cannot be suspended without some inconvenience. I hope I am not trespassing on your time?"

The tone of voice in which Keith uttered his polite assurances seemed to strike a new chord in the mind of his host; for he did not immediately resume his seat, but continued to bend his keen eyes upon Keith with a more prolonged scrutiny than consisted with his apparent good breeding.

"Chisholm," said he, at last, in a half soliloquy, "Keith Chisholm! Keith, the son of Valentine Chisholm, of Inverhaggerne! Odd's my life! is it possible that I see the son of my old friend? My dear sir, can you excuse me for not immediately remembering that you were your father's son? Sit down, sit down, I pray you, and tell me how the world goes with you, how the old acres are thriving, and whether Valentine has left behind him a more careful hand than that which, in my day, managed always to spend five thousand a year out of three, and yet

to wrong nobody—‘Vex not his ghost’—it was a kind spirit, and a generous—gadso! it makes me young again to see you, my young friend. And is the new house still standing, or have you been obliged to pull down one half to finish the other? None of the old lands in pawn for it, I hope, eh? I shall be sorry to see you, if that is the business you have come about.”

Keith smiled sorrowfully. “No, no, sir; my dear father’s extravagant mansion was finished and paid for long ago; and it so happens that the lands, in which you are good enough to take an interest, were left by him in a more careful hand than he would, perhaps, have altogether approved in his only son, whose prudence, after all, has been worse requited than his own generous profusion. The history of Inverhaggernie, since you were last intimate with it, is somewhat too long and tragic to be obtruded on you just at present, my dear sir; but, if you will take the real business of my visit into your keeping, I may, perhaps, find an opportunity of troubling you with these matters another time.”

“Ah! ah! is the tide ebbing so?” answered the lawyer, with a look of great interest and kindness. “Well, well, my good friend, no one knows better than I how hard it is to answer questions which admit of no replies but truths that we are willing to forget. So we will go to business; but it must be a tough job which takes precedence of a pecuniary crash such as you have hinted; nothing of life and death, I hope?”

“You have guessed it, sir,” answered Keith. “I am come to entreat of you to defend young Randolph against the most unmerited prosecution of Lord Inverawe. I need not describe the case, for the newspapers are full of it.”

“Randolph!” repeated Mr. Cary; “gadso! that is curious enough; perhaps you don’t know that it was only a day or two ago that I refused to take up the case of the complainant?”

Keith’s countenance fell. “Then I presume I am to expect a similar decision,” replied he, in a tone of great chagrin. “And yet, Mr. Cary, I am very certain, that if you were fully master of the merits of the case, you would make the undertaking it a point of conscience.”

“Why, it was a point, not altogether of conscience, but certainly of feeling, the refusal of Lord Inverawe’s papers,” answered the barrister. “I have a foolish interest in the young man personally—a sort of bachelor’s caprice of my own; and as the act, from which I doubt not he will be the greatest sufferer, however the issues may go, is one which, in nine cases out of ten, is committed without any criminal views whatever, I have considered it a pity that the boy should suffer all the rigour they are meditating against him—at least through *my* means; and so, like a silly old fellow as I am, I have chosen to reject the guineas and the success together.”

“My dearest sir,” said Keith, laying his hand upon Mr. Cary’s arm, and talking in a tone of breathless eagerness, “you have spoken the very reasons most urgent why you should perform the part of his advocate. You have made it out almost a duty that you extricate this unfortunate youth from the mesh which fate, rather than his own imprudence, has gathered round him. Let me entreat of you, my good sir, to look at the matter as I do; and I consider, that if the laws of England visit Julian Randolph’s involuntary sin with the punishment of death, they who enforce them will draw down upon their own heads a heavier weight of guilt than that which they

affect to punish. Julian Randolph is no more burdened with the crime of wilful homicide than a newborn babe. Let me beseech you, Mr. Cary, if you would save a whole family—two families, from utter desolation, and offer the fruits of your talents as a sacrifice to Heaven—let me persuade you to save this poor boy from an unjust sentence.”

“God bless you, Mr. Chisholm,” remonstrated the barrister, with a complacent twinkle of his hawk’s eye, “you overrate my ability, even if my will were at your service. I have no power to overturn the whole weight of the profession, which, I doubt not, will lie at Lord Inverawe’s command. But this matter seems very near your heart, my young friend—may I ask if the youth be a connexion of your own?”

“None,” answered Keith, in a quiet voice, “but his sister is my affianced wife; and if you could see the fidelity and devotion with which she is tending and comforting her twin-brother at this moment in the condemned cell of Newgate, you would appreciate my anxiety the better after it.”

“Pretty creature!” said the kind-hearted lawyer; and Keith fancied that the black eye glittered even more than usual; “pretty creature! I must come and see her, at all events; for my acquaintance with the last Mrs. Chisholm of Inverhaggernie gives a double interest to my introduction to her successor. You may prepare your fair *future* for a visit from me to-morrow; and if she objects to receiving me in her present quarters, tell her I shall like her all the better there—that she will adorn her dismal lodging ‘like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear.’ Gad’s my life, boy, she must be rewarded for all this heroism: let us see.”

And, thanks to the interest awakened by his gentle Katherine, Keith found himself speedily engaged in an animated discussion of the merits of Julian’s case.

As Keith expected, Mr. Cary considered the evidence of the man of the house in whose hearing Major Moira’s dying declaration had been made of vital importance, and questioned him in the most minute and peculiar manner regarding the means by which he believed him to have been got rid of; and when Keith declared his conviction that Lord Inverawe himself had effected his removal, the lawyer hummed a little, like a person who is not entirely satisfied, and then said abruptly,

“Do you know anything of Lord de Mar?”

“Nothing very creditable to him or profitable to myself,” answered Keith, smiling; “but I know him to be the colonel of Julian Randolph’s regiment, and no friend to his cause in the present dilemma.”

“Is there any great ground of alliance between my Lord de Mar and Inverawe?” pursued Mr. Cary; “for the former was the medium of communication between me and my rejected client, and I imagined there might be some community of interest between them in this matter.”

“There is none that I know of,” answered Keith, “except that Major Moira, during his life, enjoyed the distinction of being for some time favoured suitor of the Lady Ida. Whether this is enough to make the father-in-law elect as eager for vengeance as the real parent, I cannot tell; but in my opinion the chances are not much to be relied on, as Julian Randolph occupied the same high place in former times.”

“How long ago was that? and what occasion-

ed the overthrow of his pretensions and the establishment of Major Moira's?" asked Mr. Cary, in a keen, inquisitive tone, and with an expression of face which Keith could not at all understand.

"Why," answered he, "I cannot calculate the exact length of time by days and weeks, but circumstances may do as well; and I can tell you that, as long as Julian was looked upon as the heir of a large fortune, he was at the pinnacle of Lord de Mar's favour, and through his, I presume, of his daughter's; but no sooner was it noised abroad that the said fortune was left to his sister, than Julian was flung aside immediately, and the major's value raised to a premium. Whether it might effect a reaction in Julian's favour, now that he has no longer a rival—the knowledge of his being the undisputed possessor of something beyond twenty thousand a year—I cannot tell; but if it would, I wish, for the sake of his interest, that it were known."

"Twenty thousand a year!" said the lawyer, with a look of bewilderment; "you are speaking in riddles, my good friend; you do not mean to say that old Fletcher's will is rendered null and void after all?"

Keith looked surprised in his turn at the extent of his friend's information.

"I do indeed mean to say so," answered he; "I mean to say that Miss Randolph, by a deed of gift irrevocably signed and sealed, makes over her whole interest in the property to her brother, reserving for herself only the portion which she knew to be originally intended for her."

"Pretty creature!" repeated the lawyer. "It would be too cruel if such a noble generosity as this should be rewarded by the affliction which seems to threaten her. I shall see her to-morrow, to a certainty: take care that she is in the way when I pay my visit to my young client. Meantime, I should be well pleased if either you or I could find ways and means of putting Lord de Mar in possession of certain facts of which he is at present in ignorance. Do not look so surprised, my good sir—I only mean that the knowledge of these facts might serve to correct the judgment which his lordship had formed of our youthful prisoner. Motives, you know, may very easily be ascribed to a penniless soldier of fortune, such as cannot even be in thought attributed to the possessor of an enormous property. Let me see—the family is still at Brighton, but daily expected in Belgrave Square: if they are not here soon, I shall take the matter up myself. And now, Mr. Chisholm, in conclusion, let me impress upon you the importance of that man's evidence. If he were fairly in our possession, the bowl would be at our feet, and we might snap our fingers at king, lords, and commons. But, in the absence of this, I warn you it is a case of extreme difficulty and uncertainty—one which depends almost altogether upon argument. Gad, Mr. Chisholm, I would move heaven and earth to possess myself of this witness."

Keith had no longer anything to complain of in a want of interest on the part of his counsel. The barrister took up the cause of Julian as if his interest in him had been almost maternal; and Keith, after discussing with him the means already set on foot for the recovery of the missing witness, took his way back to the jail with a heart lightened of half its load.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"The dearest friend to me—the kindest man,
The best conditioned and unwearied spirit."

SHAKESPEARE.

"MIND is its own place," said the greatest of English poets, and never was an axiom better illustrated in the eye of Keith Chisholm than by the change which a few hours had effected in the aspect of Julian's prison-room. His own application to the governor, aided by the consideration of Julian's peculiar circumstances, had succeeded in somewhat abating the rigour of those rules which were wont to circumscribe the list of indulgences granted to one committed on so grave a charge. And Katherine's well-filled purse having fairly interested all the understrappers of the establishment on her side, she had been able to transport whatever she pleased into the cell.

Accordingly, every article which could by possibility contribute to the comfort of the prisoner had been collected by Katherine's eager kindness. Moreover, the thick woollen plaid had been spread upon the floor, while Katherine's large shawl did duty for it upon the rude bedstead; and the introduction of warm bricks had even banished the chill air from the apartment.

When Keith entered, Julian was in the act of folding a letter to his mother; while Katherine, amid a pleasant litter of books and writing materials, was talking to him in a soft, cheerful voice, from which even her anxiety seemed to have fled. Her face was the image of placid and holy serenity; but Keith found the survey of Julian's not less eloquent features yield him a feeling of a totally different kind. There was a transparency of complexion and a quick variation of colour on the boy's cheek which pained him in spite of himself.

"I have brought you a pleasant opiate," was his cheerful salutation. "My day's work has been entirely successful; the first counsel in England has interested himself, heart and mind, in our cause; and, what is more, the opinion entertained by him of its merits leaves us nothing whatever to desire."

"God bless you, my friend," answered Julian; "I have no words in which to thank you."

"Let deeds take their place, then," returned Keith, smiling, "and return the obligation at once by following my advice, and going instantly to bed. By your own confession, you had very little sleep last night, and I am most anxious that you should awake to-morrow with a clear head and reinvigorated body. Come—we must not overtax the good governor's patience by desiring him to add a pair of candles to his other favours, so you will soon be driven to bed by the darkness. You are not afraid to encounter another night upon your hard couch?"

"Ah!" interposed Katherine, "that is the only thing, dear Keith, in which I found him unmanageable; he would not permit me to use a single effort to procure him bedding. What shall we do?"

"Do, dear Katherine," answered Julian, eyeing his rude couch with a half-melancholy smile, "leave me in possession of it, to be sure. It is not quite so inviting as a couch of fresh heather, certainly—but that is matter of taste; and this, you know, is the bed of Procrustes, meant to suit all men, independently of their will altogether."



"No, no, it is not," said Keith; "there is no bed of Procrustes except that with which our conscience furnishes us; and in such a case, dear Julian, it must always be an easy one to you."

Julian thanked his friend with a look in which Keith read more of the sensitiveness of bodily weakness than he liked to look upon, and he renewed his persuasions with Katherine to depart.

"You are the very picture of fatigue, my dear boy, and I advise you to breakfast alone to-morrow. Now, since Katherine has, in some sort, ordered your ménage, you are sure of being made tolerably comfortable, and you will be better prepared for Mr. Cary by spending the morning alone."

"Mr. Cary!" repeated Julian, in a tone of surprise; "who is he?"

"Who is he?" was the rejoinder; "Mr. Cary, of Berkeley Square, to be sure—your counsel—the first lawyer in England. I hope you approve my choice?"

"Mr. Cary!" repeated Julian, again, in a tone of soliloquy; "how curious! how very striking!"

Keith remembered the personal interest which the lawyer himself had professed in his young client, and now Julian's participation in the sort of unacknowledged acquaintance puzzled him exceedingly.

"What do you know of him, my dear Julian?" said he; "surely you are already mutually acquainted, for I have just heard him express the warmest personal interest in you, and now your exclamations lead me to suppose you are aware of the fact. Is he a friend of yours? I never heard you mention him before."

"Did he—did he indeed express a personal interest in me?" exclaimed Julian, while the blood rushed wildly over his cheek and forehead; "I wonder if it was in earnest."

"In earnest, Julian!" repeated Keith; "what a strange notion! Why, I tell you, man, that he has, but a few days ago, rejected the case of your opponent—ay, and he more than half hinted to me that he had expressed, both to Lord Inverawe and Lord de Mar, his earnest desire that it had been in his power to befriend you at their expense. What do you know of Mr. Cary to make this news so incredible?"

"Nothing—nothing," answered Julian, his face still glowing with pleasure; "only I imagined, of course, that he too—that is, that Lord de Mar—I mean that perhaps his duty—pshaw! I will tell you all about it to-morrow, dear Keith; and I believe you are right, and that I shall be much the better for a night of quiet rest. Good-night, then, dearest Katherine; I am sure that I shall sleep sound now. The notion of having Mr. Cary as my counsel has given me new life. I dare say we shall overcome these troubles yet. Good-night, my Katherine."

And as he pressed his hot cheek to hers, she felt distinctly the traces of a tear which he had turned aside to conceal. She lingered long over her adieus, and their fondness lost nothing from the mixture of anxiety occasioned by his emotion. But at last they parted, and when the door had closed upon them, Julian knelt upon the ground, and, burying his face in his hands, relieved his overburdened spirit with a burst of weeping.

There never was a purer flood of tears shed within those dismal walls. An angel need not have refused his sympathy to the emotion from

which they sprang, for it was mingled with the youthful enthusiasm of gratitude to God for an undeserved and unexpected blessing, and the softest beams of that hope which we have been told "is brightest when it dawns from fears."

Katherine and her companion took their way to her solitary home in silence. Keith's considerate management had procured for Katherine ingress to the prison through the governor's house, and she was consequently saved the passage through that dreary portal which seemed to convey the "*lasciate ogni speranza*" to her imagination each time she crossed its threshold.

"What have you brought away the Morning Post so carefully for?" asked Keith, with a smile, as Katherine crushed the newspaper into her reticule. "Is it to amuse you in your solitude, or is it to be my companion in mine?"

"Neither, dear Keith," answered she; "I only carried it off because I would rather Julian should not see a paragraph among the list of fashionable arrivals, which I thought might plague and distract him."

"Indeed," returned Keith, abruptly; "whose arrival does it announce, dear Katherine? Not the De Mars?"

"Even the De Mars," answered Katherine, with a very sad smile; "and with this additional intelligence, that his lordship and the Lady Ida are expected to join a small party of the *élite* at Mrs. Somebody's this very evening—she who was loved with such idolatry by one who is now living in a prison cell."

"At whose house did you say, dear Katherine?" asked Keith, still busy with his own thoughts, and quite regardless of her quivering tones.

"Mrs. Cleveland, or some such person, of Curzon-street," was the reply.

"Mrs. Cleveland!" exclaimed Chisholm; "my mother's cousin! How fortunate! Make haste, dearest Katherine. I must hurry home to dress for this *soirée*. You will not mind my leaving you to go to a ball, dear, will you?"

"You, Keith!" said Katherine, with a look and tone which betrayed some doubt whether he were master of his senses; "you—a ball—what can you mean?"

"Only that I am most anxious for some communication with Lord de Mar," answered he, "and I can imagine no more plausible or straightforward mode of effecting it than this. If I can hold any communication with the Lady Ida, I shall be so much the better pleased. Trust to my report to-morrow morning, dear Katherine, for the true account of the young lady herself. Perhaps she may not know as much of Julian's affairs as we do. Let us wait."

And they hurried forward to Katherine's apartments, he explaining to her the value of his present opportunity of meeting the De Mars, and she listening and applauding him for the sleepless activity of his affection.

CHAPTER XLV.

"If I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners."

SHAKSPEARE.

LORD DE MAR was seated in the comfortable seclusion of his own peculiar snugger in Belgrave Square, in a fauteuil of rosewood and gold, and a dressing-gown of rich brocade.

There was a large fire in the grate and a silver lamp on the table, while a salver, containing a *Sèvres* cup and a highly-ornamented coffee-pot, flanked the array of letters and papers with which he seemed engrossed. A large Indian screen was placed between his chair and the door, over which, as well as the two lofty windows, hung a massive curtain, of itself sufficient to exclude every breath of wind from the apartment. His feet were pressed into slippers of swan's-down, and his chair turned in towards the fire, as if to enliven his employment with the luxurious warmth it shed upon him.

One might have supposed that no interference save that of Asmodeus himself could avail to crumple a leaf in the bed of roses upon which the highbred man of fashion was reposing. It was evidently a night of profound application; but if outward circumstances can ever alleviate the burden of toil, that of Lord de Mar could scarcely suffice to overwhelm him. And yet, as the experience of at least six thousand years goes far to prove, human happiness is never in greater danger than when the prospect of its security appears the fairest. Accordingly, the ease and comfort of the busy recluse were suddenly menaced by a fashionable knock at the hall-door, which resounded through all the chambers of the house, and followed the stopping of a carriage, which drew up just under his lordship's windows.

A start of surprise and an expression of great annoyance were visible on the handsome features of Lord de Mar. He seemed provoked by the anticipated entrance of an intruder whom it would be impossible to evade. The French clock on the mantelpiece pointed to the hour of ten, and the sight seemed to reassure him, for he resumed his occupation as before. But in a few moments the lightest of light touches was laid upon the lock of the door, and ere he had quite succeeded in crushing the majority of the letters and papers which lay around him into the drawer of his escritoire, the intruder stood before him.

Verily, if Don Asmodeus had come in person to interrupt the repose he envied, he had at least chosen the outward semblance of an angel of light; for a fairer vision than was presented by the Lady Ida, as she advanced towards her father's chair, has never been pictured by the minstrels of the East when they dreamed of the hours of Mohammed. She was in all the radiance of full dress, and her very garments seemed to derive beauty and grace from the figure they adorned, as the clouds of evening are saturated by the glory of the sun, until in themselves they become things of light and splendour.

The fair girl, with all her dazzling loveliness, seemed something changed since we last drew the curtain that hides her from us. Her form was slighter than even its former nymph-like proportions, and the fairy symmetry of her throat and waist excited in the gazer a feeling of interest such as their girlish and blooming roundness had failed to create. The colour upon her cheek was of the brightest, although most delicate shade of crimson; and yet the tint carried in it an expression of deep feeling, almost of excitement, which her former light colour very

seldom betrayed. You could not help suspecting, while you gazed upon her, that with all her juvenility of appearance, the mind and the heart which that delicate form enshrined had advanced with a rapid stride towards the depth and intensity of womanhood.

The Lady Ida was dressed in a rich robe of that peculiar and silvery tint called *lilach*, which resembles nothing so much as moonlight; and the drapery of exquisite lace was confined, in lieu of gems, by white moss-roses, such as no art could imitate nor purity outvie, save that of the shoulder on which they rested. The pale auburn hair was braided, contrary to her custom, far away from the forehead, and fastened back by a coronal of the same beautiful flowers, till, behind the ears and from the back of the head, its heavy curls hung in a luxuriant flowery mass, unrestrained by combs, or bands, or fillets of any kind whatever.

Her father, despite of his impatience at the interruption, smiled proudly and fondly on her highbred and most refined loveliness as he put down his pen and laid his hand among her beautiful tresses.

"What has brought you back again, sweet?" said he, when she had half-seated herself on the broad arm of his chair, and was looking into his face with an unquiet expression, as if she had business with him which she was loth to disclose. "Has the carriage broken down? or is the necklace forgotten? or has Mrs. Cleveland shut her door and refused admittance to her visiter? You cannot have left your party already, surely, or it must have been of the stupidest. You are not going to break through rules, and go anywhere else to-night, I know. What brings you home so soon?"

"Is it so soon?" replied she, glancing with an absent look towards the clock; "I danced a little—that is, I waltzed once with Mr. Chisholm."

"Chisholm!" repeated her father, with a sudden expression of surprise and displeasure, instantly modified into a look of simple wonder; "what could take Chisholm to a ball to-night? One might suppose him occupied with matters rather inconsistent with a scene of amusement. No wonder that you found him an uninteresting partner."

"I did not find him so," replied the Lady Ida, eagerly; "on the contrary, all his communications were of the most engrossing kind."

"Indeed!" returned he, in a tone of chagrin, not unmixed with displeasure; "they were of Randolph, I conclude."

"Yes, they were of Randolph," answered the girl, bravely, though she blushed over neck and forehead; "and—and they were not of a nature to make a gay scene the more agreeable."

Lord de Mar was silent. It even seemed that he shrank under the penetrating gaze of his child.

"You have deceived me, papa," continued she, "as to the extent of his liability. I did not suspect this affair involved such terrible consequences. Mr. Chisholm told me he apprehended the very worst."

"What can Chisholm know of it, and what right has he to plague you with idle conjectures!" said Lord de Mar, hastily. "You pay little respect to your own dignity, I must tell

you, Ida, in permitting such tales to be brought you, and still less if you suffered the effect they produced to become visible."

The beautiful and noble-looking creature drew up her delicate figure to its full height, and her eye flashed with her father's own haughtiness of spirit as she replied, "My dignity will receive no stain that *I* can avert. I trust it may be equally safe in your keeping." Then, with an immediate return to her accustomed gentleness of mien, she added, "Mr. Randolph's affairs are the general topic of conversation. Mr. Chisholm told me nothing different from what the whole circle besides were endeavouring to extract from him."

"And what might be the extent of his communications?" asked his lordship, in a disconcerted tone.

"He told me," returned she, quickly, "that the innocence of Julian Randolph was best known to those who are plotting for his destruction; that for the gratification of an unjustifiable revenge, his enemies had managed to suppress or conceal the evidence which they know to be in itself sufficient to obtain his acquittal; and that, if the prisoner's friends are not successful to outwit the malice that is operating against him, the very worst may be apprehended — ay, and he even insinuated, my lord, that the interposition of Julian's colonel might go far to recover the evidence that is so precious to him."

The beating of her heart and the faltering of her lip would have been easily discoverable, had not his lordship kept his eyes riveted on the page before him.

"And what had you to reply to such important disclosures?" asked he, at length.

"Nothing," replied she, "but the expression of my confidence that, if it were in my father's power to free him, Julian should be free."

"You were somewhat over bold to pledge yourself thus readily for my assistance in averting the punishment of so grave a crime," answered Lord de Mar, coldly.

"No, I was not," said the Lady Ida; "you are in a great measure answerable for the enmity that subsisted between Julian and the unhappy man who is now no more. It was by means of your misrepresentations that they ever occupied the position of rivals—you know, my lord, upon what grounds you allowed Major Moira to frequent this house in the character of a pretender to my hand. But this is nothing," and her voice softened again. "You once loved Julian, my dear father, and would have gone through much toil and inconvenience to befriend him in a smaller matter; and though your opinion of him may have changed, surely our feelings are not to be thus taken up and laid down at will. There must be enough of old remembrance left to make you still exert yourself in his behalf."

Lord de Mar looked up to her with a disagreeable and sinister smile as he replied, "You forget, my dear Ida, that this boy has robbed my old friend of the heir of his house, and myself of a rich son-in-law. These are not grounds on which to build a reasonable expectation of my support."

"He!" said the Lady Ida, and her eye flashed, and her beautiful veins started with indig-

nant surprise; "he a son-in-law! not through my instrumentality could you have ever called him so. You know him, Lord de Mar, to have been to me an object of unqualified repugnance; and if you do not already know it, I have now to inform you that, instead of looking for his blood at Julian's hands, I find no source for suffering in his death except so far as it shall be such to him who is the unfortunate cause of it."

"Grant me patience, girl," said his lordship, in a tone of extreme vexation, and forgetting his polished elegance in the irritation of the moment; "you will drive me at last to make disclosures that will convince you of your own headstrong folly in first rejecting the heir of a wealthy peerage, and then forcing your notice upon an obscure beggar like Julian Randolph."

"Beggar!" repeated the Lady Ida, and her small mouth parted with surprise.

"Yes, beggar, since you constrain me to tell the truth at last," replied he. "Had I not feared to enlist your childish romance on the side of his poverty, I should have told you long ago that his hopes of the Indian fortune had all melted into air. It has been bequeathed to his sister, and five thousand pounds are the inheritance of your favoured suitor."

The fair and gentle girl stood for a moment the image of speechless amazement; then the colour went from her face, and she burst into a passion of tears.

"Oh, father, how cruelly you have deceived me!" said she, in a tone of the most touching distress. "I see it all now—I see it all at last; and while you taught me to believe that he wooed me only that my name might ennoble his wealth, he has been writhing under the conviction that it was his altered fortunes that estranged me. Oh, father, father! how could you treat me thus?"

And the pride of her nature came to chase back the tide of her tears and her reproaches, and, with a breast heaving and a cheek flushed with excitement, she stepped haughtily across the floor and rang the bell.

"Bring round my carriage again immediately!" were her orders; "I shall drive far into the city."

"What! you are going straight to Newgate, I presume," said her father, with an ironical smile, when the man had vanished, "to lay your hand, and fortune, and influence at the feet of the handsome criminal!"

"Your lordship has for once failed of your usual acuteness," answered the Lady Ida; and the quivering of her lip was strangely at variance with the tone of pride and coolness which it sent forth; "I certainly am not going to Newgate, nor is the object of my drive such as you have assigned, although it is assuredly taken in the hope of apprizing one whom I have most deeply and unwittingly injured that I have been as much a dupe as himself, and to assure him that, though my father's interest be denied him, *mine* shall be unceasingly exercised in his behalf."

Lord de Mar looked at her for a moment in breathless amazement, and as if he could scarcely credit the evidence of his senses. But there was such firm decision in her eye, and such total disregard for any opinion he might form upon the matter, in the self-possessed air with which

she lifted her shawl from the table, and proceeded to fold it round her, that he could no longer doubt of her being in earnest.

"Ida," said he, at last, in a tone which surprise seemed to have sobered, "if you are in your senses, you must know that such words as these can only be interpreted as the vagary of a child."

"You will find them the resolve of a woman," answered she, coldly; "you have wounded my feelings in the most tender part; and since you followed your will in the planting of the sting, you can only expect that I should follow mine in the curing of the wound."

"Do you imagine, child," said Lord de Mar, while his surprise still seemed to overpower even his anger, "that I am going to permit you to leave home at this hour of the night, on the first caprice of damsel errantry that strikes you? I do not desire to know the place of your destination. The question of whether you shall go or not is not one instant to be dwelt upon: you will please to countermand your carriage immediately; it is not my pleasure that you leave the house again to-night;" and he was about to address himself again to his employment, adding, in a sullen tone, "I shall not have my honour brought in question, at all events."

"Do not fear, my lord," returned she; "your honour is as safe with me as my own—I am not disposed to compromise either; and the place of my destination is one of which I have too little cause to be ashamed for me to hesitate in confessing it: I am going to call for Miss Randolph, of Killurie, at her own apartments. If you, father, were so generous as to make me the only reparation which remains, it would be by coming with me yourself on so just and equitable an errand. I am going to tell the sorrowing sister of—Lord Inverawe's victim, that the best interest of all my noble relatives will be given to Julian, and that my home is open to her as a place of refuge during her melancholy and anxious sojourn here."

A look of impatience from her father interrupted her, but she answered it without allowing him to speak.

"Do not attempt to detain me, my dear father," she continued, in a grave, determined tone; "I am perfectly well aware of what is due to propriety; and, with the attendance of my own servants, and under the care of my good nurse, no one can have a right to say that I violate it. I warn you to beware of thwarting me in this, my lord: you cannot rule by deceiving me, and all that is gained by such a course is to give me the right to wave authority which till this moment I found it my happiness to obey. I declare to you, that if you persist in refusing your sanction to my present design, I will wait only for to-morrow before I lay every circumstance of the case before my guardian, and demand the redress which it will be to *your* discredit, more than to mine, that I should ever have to solicit from a stranger. I warn you once more, papa, that if you deny me this, not an ear in London but must ring with my story ere long."

Lord de Mar looked irresolute. He was not unaware of the firmness of his over-indulged plaything, and the composure of her plans star-

ted him. She had a great deal in her power, and he was scared by the possibility of an application to her guardian.

"If Mrs. Graeme is to go with you—" said he, in a cowardly tone.

"She is certainly going with me," returned the Lady Ida, extending her hand with a lofty air to her father; "will you be so kind as to hand me down stairs? It is of consequence to me that she should know that I leave the house with your knowledge and approbation."

It was strange, and almost amusing, to see how her pretty, imperious manner governed him. By the time they reached the hall-door, he was arranging her shawl, and warning her against the keen frost of the air.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"This is such a creature—
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal
Of all professors else; make proselytes of who she
But bid follow her." SHAKESPEARE.

KATHERINE RANDOLPH found herself, for the second time, alone in her little parlour, with a very different sensation from that which had overwhelmed her the evening before. The immediate pressure of anxiety on Julian's account was removed, and she found that she had more of her attention to bestow now upon the engrossing considerations of the future. Keith's bearing cheered her, she scarcely knew why; and she looked forward to Mr. Cary's visit with a feeling which, despite its weight of anxiety, took a colouring involuntarily from the cheerfulness of her friend. She knew most of the subjects which had been discussed between Keith and the lawyer; and, upon the whole, the impression left upon her mind was consolatory.

There is something very cheering in the conviction that other and stronger hands have bound themselves to the helm of our fate; and Katherine confessed its influence, even while the exhaustion of her mind and body prevented her doing justice to the full value of the encouragement afforded by it. It was, in fact, a subject on which Katherine did not dare to form an opinion. Her mind shrunk from every attempt to contemplate the real position of Julian, with an agony which she was too weak to combat. The sufferings of the present hour were nothing: she had overcome the first heart-sickening repugnance to his gloomy abode—yea, she had even wept over the pale transparency of his cheek, and ended by presaging that one week's nursing at Killurie would suffice to restore its colour; but when the thought arose that that privilege might never be hers again, a mortal sickness crept over her, and she forced back the image from her brain with a conviction that the contemplation of it must destroy her.

A trying and weary ordeal it was for that gentle and loving creature. She who had never known what it was to live without the light of her father's smile following her continually—who had encountered no moment of solitude except what her own elevated nature sought for amid the glory and the majesty of nature—who had walked through life without any heavier responsibility than that which attached to the

commonest domestic comforts of those she loved—now to be alone in what she felt to be a far country—it was altogether a situation for which Providence had manifestly not designed her, and under which there needed the highest and holiest sense of duty to hinder her from sinking. Moreover, the heavy burden of her own anxieties was in itself almost more than she could sustain; and the absolute self-dependance of her present position—the obligation to veil over her own feelings, on purpose that Julian's might be preserved from the contagion of her weakness, had already wellnigh overtaxed her powers of self-command; and, now that the fetters in which she had so long kept her features were at last removed, it seemed very dreadful to have no kind voice to bless her, and to say, "Well done, my Katherine, you have done your duty bravely."

No wonder that she looked pale and careworn, or that the pen which she had lifted to write to her father hung listlessly over the page unemployed. She had no strength, no heart, to write even to him, and after one or two ineffectual struggles against the feeling that oppressed her, she laid her forehead on the table, and wept bitterly; for it was a disappointment greater than she would have chosen to confess, that Keith's sudden discovery of the De Mars's arrival had deprived her of the few moments of soothing and encouragement to which she looked forward throughout the day; and although her thankfulness for the opportune occurrence of the event turned the misfortune into a blessing, still she felt that her flood of tears might have been spared if Keith had not been called from her so abruptly.

Katherine followed him with her mind's eye into the scene, so uncongenial to his present feelings, where his active kindness had led him—pictured the Lady Ida radiant in gayety and loveliness, and utterly unthinking of the deep and bleeding characters in which her image was engraven on the young heart whose devotion had wrought for it a fate so terrible. Oh, what a wailing dissonance did the touch of this chord produce! how bitterly did the image of beauty and joy augment the pang of sympathy which swelled her heart for Julian!

Such was the temper in which Katherine sat, her thoughts too much occupied with the images which fancy portrayed to pay any regard to external things, when her musings were suddenly interrupted by the sound of a light footstep that crossed the room to her side. She had been too much abstracted to remark the opening of the door, but concluded that her good old country-woman had entered to make her compliments for the night, and with a hasty motion brushing away the tears, she raised her head to speak to her. And a start that shook her whole frame, and rendered her almost unable to suppress a scream, marked her instantaneous recognition of the subject of her melancholy reverie, the Lady Ida de Mar herself.

There she was, in her festive garments, and in the light of her ethereal loveliness. An angel from the skies could have scarcely been to Katherine a visitant more unexpected. Both stood for a moment motionless—Katherine with her hands clasped and her eyes opened wide, the image of silent amazement, and the Lady Ida with

her bright colour coming and going like flashes of lightning. At last the natural impulse of the heart predominated, and the high-spirited Ida sprang forward, and, flinging her arms around Katherine's neck, buried her face in her bosom.

How eloquent was the clasp of joy and tenderness with which Katherine replied to this gentle appeal! how much did it contain of that mutual understanding which neither of them would have dared to confess in words! Poor Katherine! her whole soul was changed in an instant—she seemed once more to be received within that link of human fellowship which a few minutes before appeared to be broken; and as she soothed the agitation of her youthful visiter, and with a woman's most beautiful and delicate tact strove to encourage and reassure her, she added stores of happiness to her own half-expended stock in the hasty and undefined impression of the joy that awaited Julian.

It was beautiful to see the ease and grace with which Katherine assumed, as a matter of course, the real object of the Lady Ida's visit—how she immediately adverted to the subject next the hearts of both, and how the gratitude and affection of the proud and sensitive child laid itself at her feet in consequence. They were quite intimate immediately, and from acquaintances of very short standing, became as familiar as though they had been friends from childhood.

"I do not know why I should have felt so afraid to see you," said the Lady Ida, with a deep blush; "I am so secure of this step being a right one, that with my father I felt not timidity; but I fancied that one of my own sex might judge differently, and think me bold and headstrong. Sweet Katherine, you know all that is due to a woman's most sensitive dignity, and I am not afraid that, even to gratify your brother, you will in anywise suffer mine to be lightly spoken of. I commit myself to you in all things, and I will not hesitate to declare what brought me hither; it was—and her cheek flushed and her eye sparkled with energy—"it was to bid you tell Julian that before this night I never knew of his loss of fortune. Tell him that they kept it from me on purpose that, while the knowledge of his poverty made him timid, I might suspect his fidelity; and they succeeded so well in influencing my bearing towards him on this assurance, that now I doubt no longer of what has been the cause of his real change of aspect towards myself. I have been very proud and headstrong, dear Katherine," added the ingenuous speaker, "but Julian has not acted quite fairly by me. Had I been stripped of rank and fortune, and every other distinction in life, I should never have done him the injustice of believing such a loss the true reason of his estrangement; and now, when I am assured by those who know best that he is penniless, I am proud to declare that the intelligence has been to me a most blessed relief."

The strength and energy of the speaker's feelings seemed to have overcome even her bashfulness, and Katherine gazed with admiration and delight on the glowing and excited face of her young guest. There was something that spoke to her most sacred feelings in the generous candour of Ida's declaration; and so beautiful was the proof of affection which it car-

ried with it, so soothing the confirmation of her fidelity to Julian, that Katherine could not resist the temptation of leaving her yet a while under the false impression of his poverty. She took the agitated girl in her arms, and thanked her with tears of gratitude and tenderness for her generous devotion; and then, when the first burst of feeling had been indulged by both, the Lady Ida sat herself down on a low seat by Katherine, and rested her face on her friend's knee in the attitude of one who, having very much to learn, is not unprepared, at the same time, to suffer.

"Julian has told you, then, of my proud reserve to him?" asked she.

"Oh, no, no," answered Katherine; "for months there has not been an allusion to your name between us. Sweet Ida, Julian could never speak of you except as the idol and star of his destiny; and when your light seemed turning away from him, he did not dare to speak of you at all. Yet I have heard your name—ay, and read it too, since we have been together. I have heard it in his sleep, whether calm or troubled, whether in accents of simple tenderness, or bitter, bitter agony. As I have leaned over him, it has always been 'Beautiful Ida!' that burst from his quivering lip, and I knew that his heart was full of you; and at night, when he looks up at the quiet sky, and thoughts that are holiest and sweetest rise within him, it is always your name that I read in the upturned eyes, as they swell with tears of devotion and remembrance. Ay, and even in his prison—when his cheek grows thinner and paler, and his smile sadder from its very frequency—when others think that the baleful atmosphere of those walls is blighting him, I know that it is but the intensity of his memory—the chill, damp cloud which the past has brought upon him; and I read *your* name, fairest Ida, in every abstracted gaze, in every long, wringing sigh and forced smile he turned upon me."

The young enthusiast turned up her face to Katherine, too eager to catch her words to remember that her own cheek was blanched, and her large eyes trembling through tears at the tale. Katherine bent down to kiss the heavy eyelids, and then, half reproaching herself for the cost at which she gathered such precious proofs of affection to Julian, she began, in a more cheerful strain, to discuss the probability of his acquittal, and the joy of once more uniting him to those who perilled all their happiness upon the issues of his trial.

"I will come to-morrow night at this hour, if you please, dear Katherine," said the Lady Ida, "and you will tell me the result of Julian's first interview with his counsel."

"Thank you a thousand times," answered Katherine; "I shall be incalculably the gainer, as usual, in Julian's happiness. If you come to me again in such a way, it will be to transform the very dreariest and gloomiest hours I ever spent into a season of joy and gladness. You do not know from what a depth of despondency your presence has raised me; and now, lest I should be the cause of evil by detaining you, sweetest Ida, let me send you home again. I am almost afraid to look at those bright eyes and that flushed cheek—go, and if you should suffer anything from this visit, do not come

again, but trust to my making you acquainted with all you would like to hear."

"Suffer!" repeated the Lady Ida, proudly. "Whatever they make me suffer, I will come again. If I may not, as I desire, take you to a house of mine, none shall prevent me seeking you in your own; but, Katherine," and her voice sank again to the low, fluttering tone of timidity and bashfulness, "do not forget to-morrow, dearest Katherine, when you are detailing the events of this evening, do not forget that Julian and I are *not betrothed*."

Katherine folded her arms round her again, and reassured her as if she had been an infant.

"My dear, dear Ida," said she, "your purity and dignity could not be more sacred in my eyes if you were already the spirit which you resemble."

CHAPTER XLVII.

"I do note
That grief and patience rooted in him, both
Mingle their spurs together."

SHAKSPERE.

It was a happy breakfast-table to which Katherine welcomed her best friend on the morrow; for Keith was himself eager to describe his meeting with the Lady Ida, and Katherine, in her turn, awoke his unqualified surprise and pleasure by the details of her own unexpected interview.

"How nobly generous, was it not, dear Keith?" said Katherine, warmly; "and so characteristic, so consistent with the spirit of pride and independence, that withheld every inch of her condescension from Julian so long as she supposed him the favourite of fortune. I believe, if she had not discovered in some way or other how Uncle Fletcher had disposed of his property, not all her anxieties on account of Julian's painful situation would have tempted her to this little act of heroism. What a high-toned feeling this is, despite of its eccentricity!"

"Do you think, then," asked Keith, with a look of surprise, "that she is still ignorant of the real state of Julian's prospects? She spoke to me of his position in society in terms which led me to believe that she was aware of everything. Do you think, after all, that she has made but another mistake, and believes that Julian is not the rich man which she believed him to be?"

"Indeed I do," answered Katherine; "and so sweet to me was the proof of her disinterestedness, that I could not resist the temptation of leaving her still in ignorance of the truth."

"Well," replied Keith, with a laugh, "my involuntary piece of gayety last night might have been spared after all, it seems, since I went to Mrs. Cleveland's for the sole purpose of making Lord de Mar acquainted with Julian's real position; and, his lordship being absent, and my success with the Lady Ida so indifferent, I might as well have stayed happily beside you."

"But for what reason were you so anxious to acquaint Lord de Mar with Julian's worldly circumstances?" asked Katherine. "Surely, mean as you believe Lord de Mar to be, you cannot suppose that his interest in Julian's favour may be bought?"

"No," returned he; "but Mr. Cary put matters in a point of view which I have no doubt at all to be the true one; and he gave it as his opinion that at present Lord de Mar entertains selfish reasons for acquiescing in the removal of Julian, which, were he to discover the fact of his enormous wealth, might probably be more easily set aside. You understand me, I am sure, dear Katherine."

"Yes," was the reply; "but you cannot surely believe that Lord de Mar would use his influence against Julian's life merely because he would not approve him as a son-in-law!"

"There is a great deal of evil, short of the sentence of death, which it is in Lord de Mar's power to assist in drawing down upon Julian," answered Keith. "I am not apprehensive of his malice or Lord Inverawe's vengeance aiming at such a point as that; yet it is pretty much in their power to blast Julian's prospects in life, and therefore I am anxious to show Lord de Mar that there is not only nothing to fear in the possible consequences of the Lady Ida's fidelity, but that, if honourably acquitted, Julian need not be held too ambitious though he aspire to the alliance of the noblest."

Katherine pondered upon these new ideas till she felt more than ever disposed to worship the heroism of the youthful Ida, whose constancy bade fair to carry with it results so precious to its object; and she resolved that this night, during her promised visit, the subject should be discussed between them in all its bearings.

When their long and pleasant talk was ended, Katherine and Keith took their way once again to the prison, where they found Julian walking up and down the corridor, calm, and grave, and self-possessed, awaiting the arrival of his counsel with a composure that Katherine dared not interrupt, even with tales of happiness. He looked so wrapped up in his own reflections, so quiet and self-engrossed, that Katherine was loth to linger beside him even with kind inquiries; and when Keith proposed to her that as Julian and Mr. Cary must necessarily engross each other for the best part of the morning, she should walk out with him while her presence might be spared, Katherine accepted the arm of her betrothed, and for the first time lost herself among the mighty and interminable labyrinths of London.

It were long to tell how, in spite of herself, and the strong influence of her anxieties, Katherine's senses were led captive by the beautiful and strange scenes that met her gaze, when Keith had transported her from the toil and struggle of the city, to such a region as that of Kensington and Hyde Park. She had never looked before upon a sky less cold, nor a world less rugged than that of her own rude though noble country, and the extreme softness and richness of the scenery in the parks—the exquisite glades and vistas that in her imagination converted Kensington Gardens into a Saxon forest, took all her enthusiasm by storm, and banished for the moment even the memory of Julian.

Katherine was sorely in need of the renovation of air and sunshine; for mind and body had been so long saddened by gloomy images, that both began to give way for lack of their natural atmosphere; and although, ever and anon,

the fond and wistful longing for Julian to share in the enjoyment arose to mar it, yet the interesting walk, and, better still, the undisturbed converse with Keith, brought her back to her gloomy resting-place with the meek gratitude of her heart in its most vigorous and restoring exercise.

It was drawing towards sunset when they returned, and yet Julian assured them that his kind and active friend had been but a short time gone. Julian himself looked as if the day had been one of excitement and fatigue; for his eye appeared large and sunken, and his hair hung in damp curls round a face that seemed to become paler every hour. Keith understood the expression of anxiety that knit Katherine's clear forehead into wrinkles at her first glance; and rightly guessing that the brother of Katherine would find his best balm and solace in her gentle tending, he left them alone together, promising to return for Katherine before the night set in.

When Keith was gone, Katherine seated herself beside Julian, and drew his pale cheek down upon her shoulder.

"How tired and faint you look, dear Julian!" said she, in a voice that sounded like music from a flute; "you have dined, I hope?"

"Oh yes," returned he; "Mr. Cary ate his luncheon with me—and the little handmaid you have enlisted at the governor's served us to your very heart's content."

"Then you have no right to look so pale and worn: there—I have been too long away from my post, since the truth must be told, and now you are drooping for want of me. Lie still now, and listen to me, and see whether I cannot talk you into better health and spirits."

"Yes, tell me of all the wonders you have seen to-day," replied he, in a languid voice, "and whether they have made you repent the precipitance of your promise to spend your life in Glenurie."

"No, no, no, I will not detail a single occurrence of to-day," returned Katherine; "all that I have to tell you happened last night after we had parted—in my solitary little parlour, which I venture to declare has never before been brightened by so fair a presence as burst upon it last night: who do you think came to visit me?"

Julian started hastily up and looked in her face, while the crimson blood shot over his forehead in an instant. There was no trace of languor left—his face was in a blaze of excited surprise. The name of the Lady Ida had not once been spoken between them since they left Scotland, and yet he did not seem for a moment to doubt that she was the visiter of whom Katherine spoke. He put his arms round her, and looked into her eyes without speaking. There was no need of words, for one look carried with it a thousand entreaties; and Katherine, her heart swelling with joy and sympathy, began to tell him of the bravery and the fidelity of his youthful love. Not one moment was Katherine puzzled between her respect for the Lady Ida and the pressing desire to give Julian the full measure of joy and triumph which she knew to be his right—nay, she guessed rightly, that the very fact of the Lady Ida having sought her out as the sister of Julian—of her having talked of nothing but his danger and his wrongs—of her

having expressly desired Katherine should bear a message of kindness and explanation to him, and, more than all, her appointment to come again to hear the result of Mr. Cary's judgment—these were in themselves sufficient to convey all that Julian would have given half the years of his life to hear; and the kind bosom of Katherine throbbed with sympathy to see him gradually turn his face away and bury it in his hands, as if to hide, even from her, the confusion of his joy.

But presently, as Katherine proceeded in her tale, she saw the colour fade and fade again from the brow of the listener, and anon two large and heavy tears trickled mournfully through the white fingers that covered his eyes.

"Julian, dearest, are you weeping! Is my little story no source of happiness to you, after all?" exclaimed she, pressing her lips to the back of his hands, and speaking in a voice of tender remonstrance; "look at me, dear Julian, and tell me what it can be that ails you."

The boy withdrew his hands, and looked down upon her face with a smile that spoke more of anguish than of joy. "What is it?" said he, "that can make God shower his blessings on a homicide?"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Were you the doctor, and I knew it not?"
SHAKSPERE.

One week, and the term of Julian's suspense would be expired; nay, the week which dated from his first arrival in town had already dwindled into three days, and there were still no tidings of the evidence of which his friends were in pursuit. Letters from Mr. Randolph, which arrived almost every day, gave no hope of his success; and even Mr. Cary's more active search, in which he had enlisted all the powers of Bow-street, had been effectual only so far as to trace the fugitive across the Channel. There were some reasons for believing his place of concealment to be Paris, but beyond an indefinite opinion they had no other security; and all efforts, unceasing as they had been, to drag him to light, had hitherto been baffled to an extent most harassing and wearing out to the friends of the prisoner.

No tidings of any sort had reached the group in London with regard to General Forbes. None of Miss Forbes's letters had been answered, nor had she obtained any clew by which to judge of his movements. The anxieties of Keith and Katherine became heavier by the hour; for although Mr. Cary did his utmost to support and encourage Julian, and professed himself, upon every occasion, sanguine of the issue of the trial, yet his extreme eagerness and activity in pursuit of the evidence were convincing proofs of the value he put upon it.

The arrangement by which Lord Inverawe had managed to expedite the day of trial was exceedingly against the success of the pursuit; since, had there been time allowed for such a measure, Keith would have departed instantly for Paris, even at the cost of leaving Katherine in her trying position, with no protector but Mr. Cary, to whom, by-the-way, she had become, as

if by intuition, an object of almost paternal interest.

Julian was seldom cheated into betraying an opinion concerning the probable result of his trial; but Katherine could trace in his very reserve, as well as in a thousand minute and half-perceptible allusions to the future, a determination to habituate his mind to the contemplation of the very worst. She could not perceive that the anxieties inseparable from his situation weighed upon his spirits in the most trifling degree; on the contrary, he never alluded to the approaching trial except in a tone of perfect composure and cheerfulness, and was ever the one to soothe, and encourage, and make light of every disappointment of their attempt to trace out the fugitive witness.

Nevertheless, Katherine could not stifle the inward voice which told her that Julian became thinner and paler from day to day—that the gayety of his smile was quenched, and the extreme sweetness and gentleness which had succeeded seemed to have no other effect than that of saddening the light it used to shed round him, till it wellnigh made the gazer weep. Katherine's heart was breaking as she watched him from day to day, and from hour to hour, droop and languish before her. There was, moreover, a deep, spiritual light in his black eyes, and a habit of long abstraction about him, so different from the laughing, mirthful boy of other days, that she sometimes asked herself whether it were in the power of circumstances thus to change him, or whether this delicacy of frame and this submissive gentleness of bearing were in reality harbingers of what her mind shrank from defining even to herself. Even her long and minute details of the Lady Ida's visits had begun to produce an effect which she disliked, for the excitement and tumult of spirit which they never failed to awaken were as uniformly succeeded by a languor and sadness that made her heart ache.

The Lady Ida came every night to Katherine's lodging, as regularly as the hour of appointment had arrived; every night loaded with fresh inquiries as to Julian's health, and Julian's spirits, and the progress of his affairs; and as often, despite the brave endeavours of Katherine to disguise the real aspect of all the three, as often did she succeed in eliciting details which sent her home with a blanched cheek and a swelling heart. Sometimes she touched upon her father's instrumentality in Julian's case, but it was always with an effort which cost extreme pain to herself, and a look of proud indignation which sealed Katherine's lips upon the subject, out of delicacy to the warm and generous nature which could not detail the baseness of one near akin to it without torture to itself. She evidently knew more of the part played by Lord de Mar in the drama than she was willing to avow; and the tone which she adopted, on every casual allusion to the subject, was one of the proudest defiance and bitterness.

Under these circumstances, the last evening but one had arrived previous to the trial, and Katherine had left Julian, as the dusk approached, more pale, more gentle, and more sad than ever, with a weight at her heart which the exciting remembrance that but one more farewell stood between them and their doom had served

only to enhance. They had succeeded at last in persuading Julian to retain Keith for the night, and Mr. Cary's carriage took Katherine home to her appointment with the Lady Ida; and, early as it was, the girl was waiting her arrival, and her pale, etherealized looks well-nigh overthrew the last feeble remnants of Katherine's composure.

"No more letters from Scotland—no tidings from France?" asked she, in a low, hurried voice, scarcely waiting till Katherine's tender greeting should be finished.

"When will Mr. Randolph come? and is there no hope of his bringing the general with him?"

"No hope, dearest Ida," answered Katherine, "and so we are resolved to unsettle our minds no more by longing for him. One day more, and our suspense will be over. I thank God for it, sweet Ida," added she, with a quiver in her voice; "for another week of those pale cheeks, I think, would kill me."

"Is he so pale?" asked the Lady Ida; and the tears rose to her eyes.

"No, no, no, dearest, it is your paleness I am deplored," returned Katherine, with a smile; "the very description of it, my Ida, would rob Julian of all the strength that is left to him."

"Ah, Katherine!" began the Lady Ida, in a tone of anxiety—but Katherine broke in upon her immediately.

"My sweet Ida, do not fear that I shall ever betray, even to Julian, anything which you wish to withhold from him; trust me, love, I will never forget the respect due to you for a moment."

"Well, but, dear Katherine," returned she, in a hesitating tone, "do you think that it would give him any pleasure to hear that—that—"

"That you looked pale from anxiety, dear Ida!"

"Yes—that—that—his affairs were all as interesting to me as to yourself—as precious."

The beautiful speaker turned away in confusion; she could not bear to consider how much the meaning of her words surpassed their sound.

"Sweet Ida," answered Katherine, clasping her in her arms, and weeping herself with gratitude and sympathy, "I believe that nothing which could be offered to Julian on this side the grave would act with half the restoring influence that would attend the assurance of your interest in him."

"Then you need not think it necessary to be so fastidious now, dear Katherine," replied the Lady Ida, and her crimson blush was quenched in a passion of tears. She lifted her head from Katherine's shoulder, and opening a workbox on the table, she possessed herself of a pair of scissors, and severed one of the long curls from her head before Katherine became aware of her intention. "Carry that to him to-morrow," said she, "and tell him, at the same time, that it comes from one whose thread of life might be as easily snipped asunder—tell him that if they succeed in fixing upon him the punishment of a murderer, when their work is done I will go with him to heaven, for this wide earth will not contain one who still possesses a claim upon my love."

She wept upon Katherine's bosom for a few moments, during which even the high-minded

composure of the latter was not immediately to be recovered, and then the girl, pale and heartstricken, raised herself with a long, aching sigh to prepare for her departure.

"You will come again to-morrow for the last time, dear Ida," said Katherine, as she folded her shawl around her. "I am not, it seems, to be present at the trial, and am going to ask you to remain during the forenoon of Wednesday beside me; nothing would have kept me from the spot except the assurance of Mr. Cary that Julian might be disturbed by my presence."

"Mr. Cary?" repeated the Lady Ida, with great surprise; "whom do you mean?"

"Mr. Cary—Julian's counsel—have I not named him to you before?" answered Katherine.

"Mr. Cary Julian's counsel?" exclaimed the other, in tones of redoubled amazement. "Oh, Katherine, why have you never told me this before? What a blessing from heaven is this discovery! Mr. Cary is my guardian, the best and most generous of human beings, and I thought Lord de Mar had succeeded in prevailing upon him to remain perfectly neutral in this matter; and Mr. Cary is that kind and active friend who has been moving heaven and earth in Julian's cause? Oh, foolish Katherine, not to tell me this before! I might never have known it till it was too late; and foolish Ida, to have deferred consulting him so long! But, thank God, there is still time for everything. Dearest Katherine, be comforted; all will yet go on as we desire it. Good-night, good-night; I must drive to Berkeley-street immediately; do not expect me to-morrow night, sweetest Katherine; I shall be too much engaged to come, and you will be anxious to spend the last moment with Julian. Good-night; and if I do not see you before Wednesday morning, expect me then, with the intelligence that Lord de Mar's name is added to the list of witnesses in favour of the prisoner."

And in five minutes she was gone, leaving Katherine in a bewilderment of surprise and curiosity.

CHAPTER XLIX.

"Mais je n'en veux point suivre où ma gloire s'engage;
Si j'ai beaucoup d'amour, j'ai beaucoup de courage."
LE CID.

LADY IDA DE MAR's beautiful grays have swept through all the obstructions in the crowded streets of the city at such a gallant pace, that even we, on our licensed conveyance of a broomstick, have been fairly left behind, and before we have emerged from Hyde Park, the fair and ardent traveller has been nearly half an hour in Berkeley-street. When the keyhole of Mr. Cary's library has admitted us, we find her with the traces of great excitement visible in a parched lip and a cheek from whence the colour has totally receded, to take up its position in bright clouds upon the neck and throat. Even the good gentleman himself seems not a little discomposed, but there is nothing painful in the evidences which his emotion has left behind. He is a little flushed, and there is a somewhat undue moisture upon his eyelids, but a smile of great interest and kindness is on his lips, and

he seems to be arguing some point in which it would give him more pleasure to take the opposite side from that which he has espoused, could he but overcome the first impression of impracticability. The first words audible are from the gentleman, and in a tone of extreme kindness, despite of the difference of opinion which they betray.

"Do not mention it again, my dear child, I entreat of you; I tell you that it is impossible, and, as your guardian, it is my duty to prevent your taking any steps in an affair so extraordinary. Only consider, my Lady Ida, of the wildness of such a scheme; I know your ignorance in all matters of the kind, yet I cannot suppose that the strangeness—the difficulty—almost the impossibility of such a *proceeding* should not have struck you."

"They have all struck me a thousand times," returned the Lady Ida, "and that is what makes me now so well acquainted with the means of obviating them; you must be aware—and it is cruel to attempt to conceal from me—that my father's rank is sufficient alone to make every obstacle melt before you. Have I not told you the only efforts that are necessary to make Lord de Mar as keen a partisan of your cause as I am?"

Mr. Cary shook his head. "How am I to know that it will not serve to incense him still more?" said he; "and how am I—or are you, young lady, authorized thus to set his declared opinion at defiance?"

"How!" answered the Lady Ida, indignantly; "on the score of his own example, which first taught me to set at naught all other considerations than those of self-interest. Never think to persuade me to anything by holding out as a motive any obligation of affection or duty; since he has been the first to set both aside for a purpose so unworthy, I cannot look upon it as anything else than virtue to throw off the yoke in the cause of honour and humanity."

"Honour and humanity!" repeated Mr. Cary, with a sly twinkle of his black eye. "These are high and sounding titles for a young lady's self-will."

The Lady Ida burst into tears. "These are not the terms in which my resolves ought to be spoken of," said she, with a tone of outraged feeling. "God knows the shame and the struggles which it has cost me to make this declaration to you at all, and nothing but a case of mortal extremity could have lent me courage to apply to you for such a purpose. I know that I am not by nature bolder or less modest than other women, but *they* are seldom subjected to such a test of feeling as Heaven has imposed upon me. Others have friends, mothers, sisters, to watch and counsel them in such emergency, but I have none; I had only my father, to whom I ever could appeal—to whom I could ever intrust my confidence, and that I gave to him as freely—ay, more freely than I have given it this night to you. And what use has he made of it? to trample—betray—abuse—outrage it, till I am now driven to apply to the only other human being on earth I am permitted to love—he who vowed to succour and support me as his own child, and now so far violates that oath that he refuses to assist me in saving one, without whose life and friendship I do not scruple to tell him that existence will be a burden to me."

"You are doing me injustice, my dear," answered her guardian; "I have been devoting the energies of mind and body to the interests of my young client ever since they were first committed to me—not without a pleasant suspicion that I might, at the same time, be furthering the happiness of my ward."

"I know you have, my kind friend," answered the Lady Ida, "and I thank you, and pray God to bless you for it; but have you not confessed to me within this hour, that very possibly your labours might all be ineffectual in a cause, the success of which would be placed beyond the reach of doubt if my father were but bound to it?"

"Well," returned Mr. Cary, "and granting that this is the case, you know that these arrangements cannot be finally completed before tomorrow evening; and how do I know that after that there will be time even to bring him round to our views of the case at all?"

"I thought, Mr. Cary, you had not to be told that Lord de Mar's self-love was a foundation on which you might build to any extent," said the Lady Ida, with that tone of deep bitterness which is never used in reference to those near of kin by a gentle or generous nature, except under the influence of painful and almost desperate excitement.

"Well—and supposing we had enlisted his self-love," pursued Mr. Cary, "what then? the man we are in want of is not to be recalled from the other side of the Channel in a single night."

"No," returned she; "but surely Lord de Mar's testimony to the confession of this man—his statement of the evidence which has been withheld, is enough, at least, to defer the final decision of the sentence—is it not?"

"Faith, child, you might have been a lawyer yourself," said the good barrister, overcome by the earnest and shrewd reasoning of his young visiter; "and I am inclined to think one might gather some good hints from an intellect sharpened by the same process that has given an edge to yours."

"I pray Heaven that there be few intellects so sharpened," said the Lady Ida; "but now I may spare myself the pain of these entreaties. I know from your eye that you will do all I want, and I will say good-night in the conviction that your pillow will be all the smoother from the knowledge that you have taken the sting from mine."

"You are your father's dear child, Lady Ida de Mar," said Mr. Cary, shaking his head, "and if we get him to swerve from his purpose in this instance, it will be the very first on record. But, God help us, who is to divulge our plot when it shall be completed, for my sympathies shall be heartily at their service, however it may be?"

"I will accept them with the gratitude which you have ever deserved from me," answered the Lady Ida, as she kissed her guardian and bade him good-night.

CHAPTER L.

"Let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, and our best means stretched out,
And let us presently go sit in counsel."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE eve of Julian's trial had arrived, to Katherine's surprise and dismay, without bringing her father with it, although his last letter had assured her that, in the most momentous day of her life, she should not be left without his support. She had not as yet, however, taken time to mourn over this disappointment, for the day had been to her one of uninterrupted exertion and excitement.

Mr. Cary had presented himself in Julian's room very early in the morning, apparently overwhelmed with business, and that, as Katherine could not help remarking, of the most unnecessary and inappropriate kind, inasmuch as he had come armed with all the deeds, bonds, and writs requisite for effecting the transfer of Mr. Fletcher's fortune from the sister to the brother; and, after insisting upon the whole affair being discussed and canvassed among them in such a manner as she believed to be not only irksome to Julian, but positively offensive, considering the very casual and passing explanation which he had received of the matter, Mr. Cary had induced them both to affix their name to every separate document, and made Keith and the governor of Newgate add theirs as witnesses.

In vain did Julian protest that his sister waited yet three weeks of her majority, and, in consequence, that her very signature was useless; and in vain did Katherine remonstrate upon the indelicacy of forcing Julian to attend to matters of this nature, when business of such superior importance was weighing upon him. The extreme gravity and earnestness of the good lawyer startled and sometimes alarmed her.

"I am quite aware of the necessity of a second signature to substantiate that made while you were under age," answered Mr. Cary to her appeal, "and these papers shall never be seen by the world until the moment arrives in which you would choose to make the disclosure. But it is necessary for my purpose that these papers be completed to-night; and I know, my dear young lady, that you have too much confidence in my zeal for your brother's cause to suspect that anything I desire of him is superfluous."

"Yes, yes," answered Katherine; "but this haste to set his worldly affairs in order—surely, dear sir, you cannot think this an imperious necessity." And her voice shook with an agitation for which she would not have dared to assign a cause.

"Pooh, pooh, child, your wit gallops, as usual in your sex, without curb or bridle. I tell you I never entertained so favourable an opinion of your brother's case as I do at this moment," returned the barrister, with a smile that restored the colour to Katherine's cheek again.

"I suspect," was Julian's remark, "that you are only multiplying occupations for yourself, my good friend. Perhaps your next piece of service may be, to see that the will for the father disposing of the wealth you have saddled on me shall have no law in it."

"Perhaps it may be something very different," answered the lawyer, dryly, as he gave the hand extended to him a hearty squeeze, kissed Katherine, and departed.

When he was gone, the day stole away imperceptibly in vain endeavours on the part of those whom he left behind to conceal one from another the feelings to which all were a prey. Julian was beyond comparison the most composed, although a quick variation of colour, and a visible effort, from time to time, to throw aside some engrossing subject of reflection, betrayed that even he was not without a hidden cause of restlessness and excitement.

By-and-by, however, Julian opened his desk, and Katherine considerately left him alone for a long hour to the society of his pen and his own thoughts. She had not given him the sweet gift intrusted to her, because she feared to unsettle his mind still farther by doing so; but she quickly divined in whose service the writing materials were to be employed; and inwardly praying that the tranquillity so indispensable to him might not be overturned by their use, she departed with Keith on the half hour's walk which they persisted daily in forcing upon her, through the uninviting environs of Newgate.

When they returned, both had the satisfaction of perceiving that their absence had produced the very best effect. Julian had completed his task, and, without inquiring into the nature of it, Katherine inwardly congratulated herself on the composure and serenity it had produced.

The three were quietly and snugly engaged in their last and most confidential discussion of the approaching trial, when a slight commotion at the door of the cell called their attention to the arrival of a visiter; and Katherine had risen with a flush of delight to welcome her father, when the door opened to admit—not Mr. Randolph, but Sullivan, who sprang forward, and took Julian fairly in his arms.

"My dear fellow—my good friend," exclaimed Julian, breathless with surprise and pleasure, "where have you come from, and wherefore have you come at all? I imagined you safe beyond the reach of fortune's malice—so safe that I have never even inquired for you."

"What!" replied Sullivan, "did you settle it quietly in your mind that I should seek after my own safety, and leave you to your fate? No, no, I am come to share the evil with you, whatever it may be; and I should have surrendered myself—for the purpose of sharing even your imprisonment—long ago, had I not entertained a hope of doing more good to our cause by remaining at large. I have not been successful, to be sure, since my search after that rascal has been as vain as all the others; but I do not yet despair of seeing him turn up even in the extremity; at all events, I have a good heart about the issue. I called upon your counsel before I came here, and he gives me all imaginable encouragement. But come—I know this is your sister, and, if you will not present me to her, I must appeal to Chisholm."

And he shook hands cordially with Keith, and made his compliments with frank kindness of manner to Katherine.

A pleasant half hour was spent in the mutual inquiries of the fellow-prisoners, and then Kath-

erine rose to leave them for the night, her heart lightened of half its load by the soothing reflection that Julian was not to suffer the anxiety of his position alone. There was something that comforted her in leaving him and Sullivan inhabitants, by necessity on both sides, of the same gloomy abode ; she felt as if the miseries of captivity must, as a matter of course, be lessened by being shared, and the sting which she had shrunk from before in the prospect of this last good-night, lost much of its sharpness in the arrival of Sullivan.

The movement made by Katherine, as well as the motive in which it originated, were neither of them lost upon Keith and Sullivan. They too retired ; the former to escort his betrothed to her humble lodging, the other to occupy the cell in which he was to pass the night.

And so Julian remained alone. His mind, however, was by far too much occupied to permit of the body feeling rest, so he lighted the night-lamp which, in consideration of his wakefulness, had been allowed to him, and sat down in an attitude of profound reflection to consider the position of his fate, and the aspect which it was likely to assume on the morrow.

The manly and cheerful bearing with which Julian endeavoured to impart courage to Katherine, had sprung from a higher source than any buoyancy of hope for the future. He had been content to look upon the worst that could befall, yet preserved that submission and acquiescence in the will of God which marked his consciousness of his own undeservings. The circumstances under which he stood were such as to render him humble and lowly to a degree that kept his wishes within bounds ; and, independently of the peculiarity of his situation, there was in the breast of the young soldier a gleam of that beautiful enthusiasm, which enables those "whose hearts the holy forms of young imagination have kept pure," to hold the happiness of life with a light and careless grasp. And, despite the promise that fortune held out to him beyond the shade, which a few hours more would either dissipate entirely or deepen till it approached the shadow of death—despite the smiles of love, and wealth, and honour, which seemed to beam upon him from the far edge of the horizon, Julian could turn inward to his heart, and say that he was ready to leave them behind, and step at once within the radiant circle of eternity.

This readiness for death, this placid contemplation of our mysterious change, may, in manhood or old age, be the effect of a strong principle acting upon the enlightened reason—may be the offspring of a weary and troubled spirit, aching for the dreamless sleep of death ; or it may be the result of a life of fasting and humiliation ; but in early youth it is the unsullied spring, the clear, limpid waters of feeling alone, that ever yield such exquisite philosophy ; it is the unpremeditated yearning of the young spirit for that heavenly home from which it has not yet entirely wandered.

But there was one prospect for the future from which Julian shrank in dismay and repugnance ; it was that of struggling with his fate under the brand of disgrace, of being pushed from the path which he had chosen, and driven to seek a name in a strange and unfamiliar walk,

where men would read his degradation in every employment. Julian's was a nature which could flourish and expand without the communion or fellowship of the world at all ; he could be happy in solitude, if the circle which he loved was around his hearth ; but if he were destined to walk under the eyes of men at all, it must be with name unstained and honour unquestioned. He was proud—proud to a fault—or, as some might judge it, to a misfortune ; but his pride was the pride of integrity—the high-strung and delicate balance in which he weighed his own self-esteem against the judgment of others—the fine sense of honour which is tarnished even by the breath of suspicion. He felt that in every way the issues of the morrow must decide his fate. It is true, Sullivan's sanguine prophecy might be fulfilled, and his life at least be spared ; but with a stain upon his name—a branded exile—even were the terrible sentence, through strong interest with the crown, reversed, what mattered it that fortune showered gold upon his path, and the obstacle which he once regarded as an impassable barrier between him and his love were removed ! What recked it ! There was no affinity between the name of the noble Ida and love for a convicted homicide.

Such was the channel into which his thoughts had turned, when the sudden opening of the door aroused him from his dream. He turned aside to clear away the traces of his mood of sadness before he should greet Chisholm, in whom he expected to find the intruder.

The room was dimly lighted by the little lamp, and, as he turned round to meet his visitor, he could only distinguish a figure folded in a long cloak, but of a height which seemed strangely at variance with Keith's manly proportions. His guest's first movement, even muffled and impeded as it was, made his heart beat, and deprived him of the power of uttering a word. They stood opposite each other for a moment in silence, and then a little carriage cap of purple velvet was thrown aside, the large cloak dropped upon the floor, and Julian's eyes were scarcely to be credited by his reason when they rested upon the beautiful and graceful form of the Lady Ida.

CHAPTER LI.

"To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
Upon that meeting slender filament."

WORDSWORTH.

No sooner was the shelter of her mufflings withdrawn, than the peculiarity of her own situation seemed to strike with full force upon the consciousness of the Lady Ida, and she stood in the centre of the little cell with her head bowed upon her breast, till its long and glittering curls fell forward as if to screen the scarlet blushes that covered her neck and forehead.

It was strange, in that rude and naked cell, with the dim light falling upon rough stone walls and window-gratings, to see so delicate a form standing in its modesty and its grace, like a lily on the lone seabeach—it was strange and very beautiful, for at no period of her most brilliant loveliness did the noble Ida present to the

eye that looked upon her an image more touching and endearing than at that moment, when the instinct of her woman's nature overcame even the high-hearted principle that had tempted her thither.

Julian gazed upon her in utter silence, as if incapable of crediting the report which the sense of vision carried to his mind. His arms were crossed upon his bosom, and his face blanched with excitement and surprise. He looked as if the next moment would see him on his knees to greet a visitant from the skies.

"I am afraid, Mr. Randolph," said the Lady Ida, at last, with great modesty and simplicity—"I am afraid you must think it very strange that I should come to you in this way."

Julian was master of himself in an instant. He started from his attitude of attention, and dropped upon his knees before her, and turned up his face with such an expression beaming through it as might befit a Moslem at the tomb of the Prophet. He pressed his lips to the hem of her robe, he clasped his hands together and gazed upon her—speechless, but in the blaze of passionate enthusiasm that lighted up his face.

The Lady Ida smiled softly, and her blush changed its character, and then the large bright tears came raining down upon Julian's hands as she bent over them, and for an instant there was nothing but a brief happy pause of confidence and contentment.

"We are friends now, are we not?" said the gentle creature, as she laid her own delicate palms upon the clasped hands of the kneeling boy; "you know all the misapprehension that divided us so long, and now I need enter into no explanation which might serve as an apology for breaking in upon you thus boldly. I could not bear that the terrible events of to-morrow should arrive without my seeing you, if it were only for a moment, that I might say God speed you! I hope—I hope"—and she turned aside with a quivering lip—"that my resolution was not unmaidenly."

Julian sprang to his feet, and strove to master his emotion by an effort that seemed to tax his whole powers of self-control. He retreated a few paces from her side, and, folding his arms once more across his breast, stood looking upon the ground as if fearful lest his very glance might scare her modesty. But his agitation was not to be concealed, and the colour that went and came with every breath he drew, proved to his youthful idol the exertion with which he strove to reassure her. She could not bear that he should imagine for a moment that she distrusted him. She went close to him, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"I am not afraid of you, Julian," said she, in a very low tone; "I have come to you as freely as though you were my sister."

The tide broke loose, and carried Julian's self-command with it in a moment.

"Oh, beautiful Ida," said he, as the long-pent-up feelings burst from his breast in words that gushed forth like the song of the nightingale, "do not—do not fear that any sense of self-reproach can follow such an act of heroism—such a work of mercy as this. I tell you that my life was wasting away, that my very spirit was withering for lack of the opportunity to tell you that, in joy or sorrow, in sadness, in dis-

grace, in captivity, in death, my soul worships your image with all the energies that remain to it. Oh beautiful, and true, and generous Ida, let me thank you for the joy of looking upon you once again—of telling you that, even were the finger of man to fix the stain of ignominy on my brow, man could not rob me of the pride and glory of cherishing your image in my heart of hearts, even while I hide mine own devotion from the world, lest your purity be overshadowed by the homage which is paid to it. Oh, sweetest and fairest one, an angel even nearer to the heavens than thou need not think it shame to visit a captive in his dungeon. Remember, gentle Ida, that this may be the last time that I shall ever look upon you."

"Do not say so—do not talk in this way," answered she, with a slight shudder; "I have no such dismal apprehensions, and yet I know most of the evidence that is against you, and all that you lack for your own acquittal. Tell me, Julian," and she steadied the tone of her voice to one of extreme gravity and emphasis, "tell me what will be the consequence if this evidence, which is still wanting, shall fail to present himself in the crisis of your fate?"

"Then," answered Julian, with a sad smile, "either I shall suffer death as a satisfaction to the laws, or I shall go forth from the presence of my beautiful idol branded by that mark which will render me an outcast from it forever."

"But, Julian," persisted the Lady Ida, laying her hand upon his arm, and each of her small features expressing its utmost capability of persuasion, "this will make no difference to me. Be the verdict what it may, men's voices cannot affect my own knowledge of your innocence; and have not you often told me that my esteem was all that you desired of Fame?"

Julian turned his face towards her once more, with the light of rapture upon it. "If I were dismissed the king's service as unworthy to wear a sword, could I still be to you the same Julian that knelt beside the nun's fountain, the favourite of nature and of fortune?" said he, in a deep, earnest voice.

"Yes," answered the gentle girl, "only with the addition of a sadder sympathy."

"If I were driven forth a homeless, nameless exile, with no station of pride or power to offer you, no wealth to pour upon you—owing all that I possessed to the efforts of my own arm—would you think of me then with the same feelings which led you to bless me with your presence to-night?"

"Yes—oh yes," answered the Lady Ida, turning her pale face towards heaven, lighted, as it seemed, by a portion of his own enthusiasm.

"Would you *love* me?" asked Julian, bending down to her, and speaking in a low whisper, as if afraid to listen to his own temerity.

The girl shaded her eyes with her hand as she breathed forth a low and timid "Yes!" which no ear less wistful than that which listened for it could have caught.

"Would you be mine? Oh, beautiful Ida, forgive me this once, would you be mine?" said the boy, and the intense paleness of feeling gave to his face the aspect of a spirit.

Ida dropped upon her knees beside him, and the large, soft tears swelled over her eyes as

she smiled in the face of her youthful and true-hearted worshipper. He was gazing upward to the sky, but she looked no farther than to the excited countenance before her. Could the spirit of man desire a triumph more absolute? could the love of woman furnish forth a more unreserved sacrifice?

Julian lived a lifetime of joy in the brief pause which followed; his bold question was answered, for Ida had laid her face upon his shoulder, and was weeping as if it were only there and thus that she could permit her tears to flow.

Oh how the gloom of the future had vanished! how the aspect of fate had changed for Julian! He felt that

"Now to die
Were to be most happy"

now to die, before the first chilling touch of reality woke him to the sense that all below the skies wears but the garb of happiness, and that one ruder breath than usual from the winds of earth may at any moment blow aside that drapery, and reveal the features of care, and toil, and sickness of the heart.

But Ida was in tears, and Julian soothed and comforted her as a mother might minister to the humours of a sick infant. All reserve and distance was forever banished from between them, and Julian folded his arms round her, and spoke words of cheer and hope, to which, under other circumstances, he would have been a stranger, but which, at this hour, set up its dominion in his heart.

"My Ida, do not weep in such a moment as this; these tears are breaking my heart," said he, in a low and troubled voice, when all his arts had but served to deepen the agitation he strove to assuage. "There is nothing frightful now, even in the worst that could befall; and if I were doomed to leave this earth only when it has become a paradise, sweet, remember that even your young life will not last forever, and when it is over, oh, Ida, how exquisite it will be to welcome you at last to our home among the stars!"

"I would that we were going thither together," she replied, in a voice, the despairing tenderness and simplicity of which overcame even Julian's firmness; and he turned aside his head to conceal the large bright drops that stole over his own eyelids.

Ida was sensible of his emotion in an instant, and the scale of her own feelings sprang up in consequence, and she, in her turn, was nerved to the task of encouragement.

"Shame upon me, Julian, for my cowardice," said she, raising her fair head from his shoulder, and striving with a pretty childish movement to turn his face towards her; "I came to you to-night brimful of a great plan whereby my father's interest would be secured in your favour, and the absence of this testimony which is so essential to your case be more than compensated; and now, when all things further my designs, I am too weak or cowardly to go forward with it."

"My sweet, I fear that even your magic influence will scarcely effect such a consummation as this," answered he, with a smile. "I already tremble for the censure which your visit to me may entail upon you; but by what

means you will render Lord de Mar a convert to your own noble views, puzzles me quite."

"Ah, the *means* forms the strangest part of my tale," answered the girl, with a blush like the glow of the departing sun. "I know how all these difficulties may be overcome, and my father bound to our cause by a tie too strong to be resisted; but—I am afraid to tell you how," and she blushed again over brow and neck, and hid her face with her hands, as if her confusion would not suffer her to look up.

"Afraid, my Ida!" repeated Julian, in an accent of curiosity and surprise; "afraid to tell your generous project to him whom it most concerns. Indeed, but I must know this mysterious plan of yours—I must know everything connected with you—tell me, dearest Ida, whisper it to me, and then the walls themselves will not hear."

She placed her mouth close to his ear, and whispered a single sentence in tones which were but faintly audible even to the listener; and when it was spoken, she hid her face so eagerly in his shoulder, that one might have thought the sound of her own voice, feeble as it was, had terrified her.

Julian folded her to his heart with a quick, startled movement of surprise and happiness; but the next moment he disengaged himself from her, and walked to the other end of the apartment, as if struggling with a degree of emotion which unmanned him.

"Noble, admirable creature," said he, at last, folding both her hands in his, and looking into her face with a gaze of mournful admiration; "oh, Ida, tempt me not, I implore you; I should be the most worthless of God's creatures if I could take advantage of heroism like this. I should be the most wretched and undone of all the race of men, could I ever so far forget my devotion to heaven and you as suffer one shade of even imaginary disgrace to stain that fairest and most innocent forehead. Sweetest Ida, have pity on me, and do not unsettle my reason by such words again."

"Julian," said the Lady Ida, with a grave smile, and erecting the youthful figure which had been bowed by the weight of her confusion, "take care how you remonstrate with me in such a matter as this. How talk you of averting the sense of degradation, and yet shame me by words like these!"

"Ida, fairest, dearest, most beloved!" exclaimed he, passionately, and flinging himself on the ground before her, "if I could accept the joy you have offered me, God knoweth with what readiness I would die the next moment; but oh—but oh—can I plunge you, my beautiful, in such a chaos of difficulty as this? My Ida, my noble and pure love, the widow of a condemned felon! Oh, dearest, spare me, I implore you."

"There is no difficulty," answered Ida; "and it is to avert the possibility of disgrace that I accept the privilege of pleading for an injured husband. The *son-in-law* of Lord de Mar is secure of a wider and stronger influence than Mr. Randolph can ever command, even as the affianced lover of the Lady Ida. But if your determination is fixed, this is no longer a place for me;" and she made a step towards the door.

Julian flung himself before her, and exclaim-

with a fresh burst of feeling, "Oh, beautiful, do not finish your work of mercy thus! Have you no pity for one who is endeavouring to shut the gates of Paradise upon himself? I dare not judge for myself, sweet Ida ; let me ask Katherine—Keith—any one who can judge without prejudice—my own powers are not to be trusted."

"My guardian, your excellent friend and counsellor, Mr. Cary, is in the corridor," said the girl, timidly ; "he knows of my bold resolution, and has been busily employed all this day with arrangements in furtherance of it : would you like to consult him?"

In an instant there was a revolution in Julian's countenance, in which joy, amazement, and a thousand convincing remembrances were all combined—Mr. Cary's eagerness to complete the deeds of settlement between Katherine and himself—and the important business which had detained him from the prison during the whole afternoon—Julian doubted not that his good friend was not only cognizant, but well disposed towards the scheme, which, till then, he had not dared to contemplate.

"My Ida—my love—my bride—God's blessing be upon you!" was Julian's fervent exclamation, as he folded her once to his breast before opening the door.

A group were pacing up and down the corridor, who advanced the instant he showed himself, and in one minute Mr. Cary, Keith, Katherine, and the ordinary of Newgate entered the cell. There was not a word spoken save by Katherine, who passed Julian by, and pressed forward to give her support to the form of the youthful heroine.

In a moment the whole party had circled round the clergyman, and the solemn service commenced ; in the strange, rude privacy of that prison-cell, with few of all the gentle train who are wont to lend courage to a maiden in this most dread extremity—in the presence only of those faithful friends, whose love, deep and sacred as it was, claimed with her no fellowship of kindred, was the Lady Ida de Mar united forever and forever—in life and death—in time and eternity—to him who loved her with a pure and passionate devotion, "passing the love of women."

The might of woman's affection could have borne her through no higher nor nobler sacrifice, and yet a blush of happiness never followed the bridal congratulations of a circle with a fairer or more innocent and childlike glow than that which mantled the cheek of the Lady Ida Randolph.

CHAPTER LII.

"Speak of me as I am—nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

SHAKESPEARE.

"This man is better than the man he slew." *Ibid.*

THE scene has changed, and the little drama which had hallowed the atmosphere of Newgate to at least one young heart, by an association so sweet and sacred, has passed away like the fair dream which a guardian angel may send to gild the eve of a criminal's doom.

Yet the precincts of the jail no longer retain the air of monotonous quiet which on ordinary occasions hangs over them ; for, although the bright sun of an April morning has not yet lost the first glory which it lends even to the atmosphere of a prison, the inhabitants of those gloomy regions are moving to and fro with an unwonted alacrity. About the long covered way that leads to the Old Bailey and the walls of the court itself, two or three javelin-men might be seen lounging over the usual preparations that precede the sitting of the judges ; and as they shook up the cushions on the bench, or wiped the dust from the lawyers' table, their conversation was sufficient to betray a more than common interest in the business of the day.

"What do you think, Jem?" was the first remark on record ; "will this old vagabond cast up at last, d'ye think? I'd rather than a goat he did, though there's not much chance of it, or our fellows would have brought him in neck and heels before this time."

"Ay, ay, they are all wondrous glib in a chase when the game's to be paid for," was the reply ; "but there's nothing blinds the eyes sooner than gold-dust."

"What! you don't suppose the old one has gone such lengths as that, do ye?" answered the first speaker.

"I'd have him take care of his self in that case ; for if it were to get wind, the people would make no bones of stoning him in his own carriage, the old rascal, and cheap he'd be of it too ; but it's surprisin' how the lad has got the mob along with him, Jem!"

"No, it's not surprisin' at all," answered Jem, stoutly ; "for an English mob, by hook or by crook, always manages to ferret out the rights of a case ; and this boy's is not ill to be come at, for he carries it about with him in his face, so I b'lieve ; they say he is as young and fair as a girl."

"Not quite," replied Jem, "seeing as that poor young creature they say is his twin-sister looks younger and fairer still, and as if her very blood were wastin' away with grief. Lord, lord, I hope old Bolton will give their enemy as good a claw to-day about Christian amity as he gave to Barney Jones when he wanted to have his wife transported. If he doesn't, I know who has the best title to it, the old lord or the young waterman."

The hints dropped by the Newgate officials regarding the general interest in Julian manifested by the populace, were borne out by the crowds which, at an early hour, thronged the gates of the Old Bailey. By nine o'clock there was not an avenue to the court that was not filled with people eager to secure places where they might witness the trial to advantage ; and in five minutes from the time when the doors were first opened, there was not an unoccupied seat in the part of the court allotted to spectators. Nor were persons of a higher rank wanting to fill up the measure of Julian's friends ; numerous parties arrived with faces uniformly expressive of interest and anxiety, and each, as it was recognised by the mob outside, received a hearty cheer or a groan of disapprobation, as the individual was reckoned favourable or unfavourable to the cause of the prisoner.

By ten o'clock the judges took their seats ;

the jury were impanelled ; the lawyers, with their great blue bags, were stationed at either end of the large table ; and, finally, the troop of miserable and squalid wretches, whose fate hung equally upon the issues of this day, had taken their places on one side of the bar which divided the dock, while Julian and Sullivan, the cynosure of all eyes, the focus of all observation, were standing together upon the other.

There was silence in the court : it was a moment of intense interest which preceded the first commencement of business, and every eye, from that of the judge on the bench to that of the meanest member of the crowd that had forced admittance, turned upon the two prisoners with a scrutinizing earnestness and gaze which few who have occupied that miserable position have ever met before.

The two youths offered an admirable contrast one to the other, and the appearance of each served to enhance the interest excited by the other in a perceptible degree. Julian, with his black dress and his raven curls pushed back from a face whose spiritual paleness presented no variation of colour greater than that offered by the blue veins that wandered over the forehead and temples, and his half-opened collar, that displayed the upper part of the throat, fair, round, and delicate, like the throat of a woman. Julian stood perfectly erect and motionless, with his arms crossed, and an expression of grave sweetness in his large, clear eyes and compressed mouth, equally removed from boldness and timidity ; one could hardly have said that he betrayed any consciousness of standing before the eyes of several hundreds of people, to whom he formed the centre of attraction and curiosity.

There was but one impression paramount in the minds of those who looked upon him : that the very outward form, so young, so beautiful, and so stamped with the impressive seal of innocence, carried with it the refutation of the sentence that would characterize him as a voluntary murderer.

Sullivan, on the other hand, presented an appearance which, though equally prepossessing, yet touched the observer with a less tender interest and a sympathy less mournful. He was a tall, fair youth, apparently five or six years the senior of Julian, with a bright blue eye, which seemed incapable of expressing the sad, self-absorbed composure that shone in Julian's, but which roved round the court with a glance of keen intelligence and an expression of honest self-confidence, which was not to be moved even by the stare of curiosity that met it.

From every part of the court the persons of the two prisoners were distinctly visible ; and, as if to make all possible provision for the gratification of the general curiosity at the expense only of those feelings which ought on such occasions to be first consulted, a large mirror was placed exactly opposite to the bar, so that the features of the young men might be reflected to the eyes of the whole assembly. It was a good illustration of the humour of both, the manner in which this last-mentioned circumstance affected them ; for, while Julian appeared quite unconscious of the situation of the looking-glass, Sullivan chafed and fidgeted every time his eye was attracted towards it by the shadow of his own movements.

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There was time for every one to make the observations I have detailed during the breathless pause which preceded the first step in the business of the day ; and, ere any one could grow weary of the occupation, the criers came forward to call over the names of the jury. There was an instantaneous movement of attention, and men settled themselves as if they anticipated work for mind and sense of the most engrossing character ; but, before the first words were spoken, a slight bustle in the court arrested the voice of the crier, and broke in upon the intensity of the silence.

Two ladies, attended by a macer, and muffled in thick veils, entered, and took their places in the seclusion of the most remote and elevated bench in the court. The general observation turned for an instant on the intruders, and the quick flush which, on their entrance, rose to the cheek of the younger prisoner, and faded again as hastily, passed unobserved. But the judge turned impatiently towards the entrance, and the people betrayed their reluctance to break their thread of expectation by a confused and universal movement of annoyance ; and the final cry of the officials, "Silence—silence in the court," seemed to interpret the desire of the whole multitude.

At last the business of the day commenced in earnest. The names of the jurymen were called, and they were severally sworn to decide upon the case brought before them uprightly and impartially. The presiding judge rose and addressed them in the usual tone of impressive injunction, to estimate correctly the important and solemn office to which they were called ; but, before he had concluded, a slight commotion in the body of the court once more arrested the speaker. One of the javelin men advanced, and placed in the hands of the clerk three or four parchments, from which the latter immediately began to read, "A true bill against Giles Scroggins for petty larceny—a true bill against Thomas Hincks for theft," and a variety of similar announcements, none of which seemed to carry the sympathies of the audience along with it, till "A true bill against Julian Randolph and Patrick Sullivan for murder" fell ominously upon the ear, and was followed by a movement of interest, like the heaving of the sea during a calm.

The bill against the two young men was the last which the clerk read out ; and, on his resuming his seat, the judge took up again the thread of his address. The peculiar situation of Julian and his friend seemed, however, to affect him deeply, for even he, to whom such scenes could not but be familiar, faltered in his speech.

"This is a grave case," said he, "gentlemen, which stands first upon the calendar—a case which will require all the attention that you can bestow upon it ;" and then, as if recovering himself, he proceeded to explain with the most minute exactness, what does and what does not constitute the crime of murder. He described it as the deliberate and premeditated assault with *malice prepense* to take away the life of another.

He then exhorted them to weigh well the evidence on both sides of the question ; to bear in mind that the noblest quality of justice is

mercy ; and if there were any doubts left upon their minds by the elucidation of the case, to let them weigh rather in favour of the prisoners than against them, "since," said he, "the laws of this Christian land will suffer less violence in the escape of many criminals from its visitation, than in the sacrifice of one innocent man's life to its demands."

As the judge sat down, there was a murmur of applause slightly audible that marked the belief of the court that he was well affected towards the prisoner beyond the mere jargon of his office, and which was far, apparently, from being agreeable to old Lord Inverawe, who had taken his seat beside the judge on the bench.

And now the rest of the prisoners being ordered to withdraw, Julian and his friend stood alone. Their countenances underwent no change, save that Sullivan's lost, perhaps, somewhat of its gayety when the counsellor for the prosecution rose to open the case, as it is called, to the jury.

Throughout the crowds that thronged the court there was a pulseless silence while he spoke ; not merely originating in the deep interest which the case excited, but because he who led it was well known as the only man at the bar who could be held as a fitting antagonist to Mr. Cary. The two, indeed, were generally looked upon as professional rivals ; and the place which the one generally occupied with regard to the other was not more opposed than were the styles in which the pleading of both was carried forward.

Accordingly, the silence of the grave prevailed as Mr. — rose from his seat. He commenced his address in language calm, and well chosen, and elegant. He used almost no action or gesture whatever, and what he did condescend to was in perfect taste and keeping with the quiet, classical, forensic style of his oratory. You felt immediately that Mr. — addressed himself to the understandings of his audience ; that if he was victorious, it would be by the force of argument alone ; and that his clear intellect and powerful reason were in no danger of being clouded or enervated by a gust of passion or a wave of sentiment. Universal attention was immediately chained to his lips, and the mind very often felt convinced, even while the heart remained inflexible.

First, he proclaimed it to be his painful duty to lay before the jury the particulars of a case involving the lives of the prisoners at the bar ; and he solemnly reminded them that neither he himself, nor the parties in whose behalf he stood before them, could be actuated by party purposes or motives of private vengeance. He demanded, however, that the laws of England should receive satisfaction for the outrage put upon them ; because a higher power than that of the law itself had said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man let his blood be shed." Finally, he entreated from the jury their deepest attention to the details of the case, desiring that they should dismiss from their minds every impression left by public rumour, and be guided only by the evidence which should be brought forward on both sides.

The address was a simple introduction to the details of the trial, differing little in substance from ordinary addresses of the kind ; yet the

calm, self-possessed emphasis of the speaker, and the cold matter-of-fact light in which he placed the circumstances, struck an involuntary chill to the breasts of those interested for the prisoners ; and many a cheek grew paler and paler, which before had been wellnigh blanched by the interest of the hour.

Mr. —, according to custom, went on to state the circumstances of the case, and began by describing the relation in which Julian and Major Moira had stood towards each other as officers in the same regiment. He then proceeded to relate how, on the morning of —, a hostile meeting had taken place between them, in consequence of a quarrel, of the nature of which the jury would be made better acquainted in the course of the examination of witnesses ; that the prisoner Sullivan, having carried a message to the deceased on the evening of the day when the quarrel took place, had gone with Randolph on the following morning to the field, where he became, to all intents and purposes, in the eyes of the law, a participant in the crime which unfortunately followed ; that shots were twice exchanged between the prisoner Randolph and the deceased, on both sides without effect ; but that, on the third discharge, the ball from the prisoner's pistol had entered the breast of his antagonist, and passed through towards the left shoulder, thereby causing an effusion of blood, which occasioned his death within the space of two hours.

Having concluded his address to the jury, Mr. — proceeded to call witnesses to substantiate his facts, of whom the first was Major Withering, the junior major of Julian's regiment, a man of low extraction and extreme dulness of perception, and regarding whom none but these two facts seemed at any period of his career to have transpired : he had officiated as vice-president at the mess-table on that evening in which Julian's misfortunes had commenced, and his examination excited more interest than any other affair in which the man had ever before borne his part. Having sworn, as usual, to speak the whole truth and nothing else, the major was questioned by his clear-headed interrogator as follows :

"You were present at the mess of the —th regiment, Major Withering, on the evening of the — ?"

"I was."

"You overheard the dispute which then and there occurred between the late Major Moira and the prisoner at the bar ?"

"I did."

"Will you oblige me, sir, by stating all that you remember of the origin of that dispute ?"

Major Withering could not take upon himself to say — did not exactly comprehend, at the time, in what the dispute had originated, but he rather suspected Mr. Randolph to have been disputing with the deceased about the possession of a picture.

"The picture was the property of Major Moira, and the prisoner desired to obtain possession of it !" asked the lawyer.

Major Withering could not tell—the picture might have been Major Moira's, or it might have been Mr. Randolph's—he could not be certain to which of them it belonged. All that he could affirm was, his impression that the

picture was the bone of contention between them.

"Which of the two was it—the deceased Major Moira, or the prisoner at the bar, who first produced the picture?" was the next question.

Major Withering thought it was Major Moira—believed it was Major Moira—was quite sure it was Major Moira, as he remembered having to wait until the latter had unwrapped the picture before he could pass the bottles.

"Had any high words passed between the prisoner and the deceased relative to the affair of the picture?"

Major Withering could not take upon himself to say that either, as the circumstance had not made much impression upon him, but he concluded there had, as Major Moira had shortly afterward left the room in a passion.

Beyond this there was very little to be got out of the major, and he was speedily dismissed to make room for Captain Murphy, the next in Mr. —'s list, a person apparently of a very different stamp from his predecessor. He was an acute, keen-eyed little man, who seemed like one perfectly master of the true side of the story, and yet in nowise reluctant to turn out the lining to serve his own purposes.

"You were present at the mess," &c., asked Mr. —; and the same answer being returned as before, but with infinitely more acuteness and intelligence, the counsel went on.

"Were you seated at table near either of the parties concerned in the duel?"

"I sat next to Mr. Randolph on the left—Mr. Sullivan occupied the seat on the right."

"Had you an opportunity of listening to the progress of the dispute?"

"Certainly I had—there was not an ear in the room to which it might not have been distinctly audible."

"And in what terms, or on what grounds, did the prisoner question Major Moira's right to the picture?" asked the lawyer.

"In terms which no man of honour could permit another to use with impunity, and on grounds which no man of honour could pronounce defensible," replied the witness, boldly, and in nowise daunted by the scowl of reprobation that met him from all sides.

"Whose property was the picture?"

"The property of Major Moira, done for himself, by his own orders, by —," and he named the artist mentioned by Major Moira on the night of the quarrel.

"Did the prisoner advance any grounds for disputing Major Moira's title to the picture?" asked Mr. —, with the air of one who is too secure of his reply to evade a dangerous question.

"None whatever, beyond his own unsupported opinion."

"Did Major Moira reply to the charge of the prisoner with any degree of violence?"

"Yes—with as much as a man of honour may be expected to use who is charged indirectly with a lie."

"Were there high words passed between the parties mutually?"

"No;" Captain Murphy could not tax his memory with any violent language used by the prisoner.

"Is it your impression," continued Mr. —, "that the prisoner continued amicably disposed,

even after his charge against the deceased had been made?"

"Certainly not; my impression was such as was borne out by circumstances."

Mr. — having professed himself satisfied with the answers he had received, Mr. Cary's desire of cross-questioning the witness was immediately attended to.

"May I ask, Captain Murphy," said Julian's counsel, "on what grounds you believe the disputed picture to have been Major Moira's property?"

"On the ground of his own word, which is quite enough for a gentleman."

"Unquestionably," answered Mr. Cary. "Pray, did you examine the picture?"

"I did; and I had an excellent opportunity of doing so very minutely while it was in the prisoner's hands."

"Did you remark the initials on the back of the picture, which the prisoner described as those of the friend to whom he suspected it to belong?"

Captain Murphy paused for a moment as if endeavouring to recollect, and then answered, "No, I observed no initials whatever."

"Did you hear the prisoner directly affirm that Major Moira had usurped a claim to the picture to which he had no right?"

Captain Murphy hesitated again. "The precise terms of Mr. Randolph's assertion have escaped my memory," answered he; "but, judging from the effect produced upon Major Moira, I should have supposed them, at least, not to be misunderstood."

"Major Moira betrayed extreme irritation then?" pursued Mr. Cary.

"Major Moira, in my opinion, resented the affront put upon him with as much moderation as could be expected," was the reply; and the lawyer declared his inquiries at an end.

The next witness summoned was the colonel of the regiment, Lord de Mar, and a murmur of recognition and expectation ran round the court as he took his place in the witness-box. The two ladies, who had all this while been cowering in the darkness of the distant benches, rose up, and bent eagerly forward to watch the examination through their veils; and the youthful prisoner turned towards the new witness with an additional pallor on his lips, and a glance of intense interest in his eye.

No clew was supplied by the outward bearing of Lord de Mar as to the feelings which actuated him. He looked extremely grave, and seemed to be impressed by the solemn responsibility of his position, but he kept his eyes steadily turned upon the counsel by whom he was addressed, and seemed almost equally resolute to avoid looking at the prisoners, the judge's bench, and the veiled females in the distance. He took the oaths with great reverence and solemnity, and the lawyer began.

"Will your lordship have the goodness to say how long the prisoner at the bar served in your regiment as a subaltern?"

Lord de Mar specified the time. "Eight months on the day of the duel."

"Has your lordship any means of knowing the terms on which the prisoner at the bar stood towards Major Moira previous to the time when he was enrolled in the —th?"

"I have had occasion to meet them at the house of a mutual friend, when they appeared on terms of friendly intimacy with each other," was the reply.

"Has your lordship any reason to believe that sources of enmity sprang up between them subsequently to the time when they became brother officers in the —th?"

After a moment's hesitation, Lord de Mar begged that Mr. —— might put the question a second time.

"Does your lordship know of any grounds of estrangement between Major Moira and the prisoner subsequently to that meeting which has been alluded to?"

"I am not at liberty to say that no grounds of estrangement did occur between them," was the reply; "but circumstances of a delicate and family nature render it painful to me to particularize those grounds."

"Is your lordship aware of there having been any particular ground of dispute between them on the day preceding that of the duel?" asked the lawyer.

Lord de Mar was not aware that any such had arisen.

"Is it your lordship's impression that the feelings of hostility with which the deceased and the prisoner mutually regarded each other, had received any aggravation on that day, or any day immediately preceding the duel?"

Lord de Mar declined answering that question, as his answer could amount to no more than a surmise.

"Would Lord de Mar be kind enough to state the sort of estimation in which the parties were respectively held, and the opinion entertained in the regiment regarding the feelings with which they were supposed mutually to regard each other?"

Lord de Mar hesitated for several seconds before he replied to this question, and once he glanced hastily towards the bench where Lord Inverawe was seated, and the colour rose slightly into his cheek, but in another moment he replied with perfect self-possession and distinctness, "Of the reputation of Major Moira it is not now necessary to speak; there are none present who will refuse their testimony to the many excellent qualities with which he was gifted; of the prisoner, against whom the laws of my country have this day compelled me to appear, I have only to say that, since I was first a soldier, I have never commanded one who so soon attached every member of the corps to himself."

During the momentary pause which followed, a loud and long-drawn sob rose from a distant corner of the house, and unsettled the speaker for an instant; but quickly recovering himself, he added, in a very low tone,

"Of the dispositions of these gentlemen towards each other, my oath compels me to confess, that the universal opinion held them to be otherwise than friendly."

Mr. Cary was now permitted to cross-examine the noble witness, and he rose with a keen and searching expression in his eyes, and a bitter tone in his voice, that could hardly escape observation.

"Is it known to your lordship whether the challenge was addressed to the prisoner, or by him to the deceased?"

Lord de Mar was unable to say.

"Would his lordship favour the court with his private opinion on the subject?"

Lord de Mar glanced uneasily once towards the prisoner and once towards the bench, and then, with a look of great pain, declined acceding to the request.

Mr. Cary paused for a moment, and the general impression was that the witness was at liberty to withdraw; but the cross-examination was suddenly resumed.

"Does your lordship know a man called William Wilkins?"

Lord de Mar started, changed countenance, and turned very pale, but replied immediately,

"Perfectly; he is the landlord of the house into which I understand Major Moira was carried after the duel."

"Is the place of his present abode known to your lordship?"

"No."

"Has your lordship seen this man since the morning of the duel?"

"Yes, frequently."

Mr. Cary begged leave to inquire where.

"His house lies in the direction of my usual morning's ride, in the neighbourhood of Brighton, and I have passed it several times since that day," answered Lord de Mar.

"Can your lordship remember on what day you last saw Wilkins?"

Lord de Mar made an agitated pause, and then replied,

"As nearly as I recollect, it was on the —."

Mr. Cary farther demanded "where the noble witness had last seen this man—whether in one of those morning rides which took his lordship in the direction of Wilkins's house, or elsewhere?"

Lord de Mar answered, with some reluctance, that his meeting had taken place in London.

"What part of London?"

"Blackwall."

Mr. Cary begged to ask "if the parties had been merely on the quay, or if they had been on board ship?"

Lord de Mar looked considerably irritated as he replied that he had last seen Wilkins on board ship.

Mr. Cary apologized for detaining his lordship, and begged, as a final inquiry, to know if any one had accompanied Lord de Mar in that interview, and who?

Lord de Mar replied, with some warmth of manner, that he conceived these interrogations to apply more to his own private affairs than to those of the prisoner, and on that account begged that they might be discontinued.

Mr. Cary bowed and sat down, and Lord de Mar left the witness-box. When he was gone, the general impression left upon the assembly was, that, despite of the obviously friendly tone which he manifested towards Julian, his evidence had very materially tended to criminate him. An additional shade of anxiety rested on every countenance, that of the prisoner alone excepted, and his seemed gradually to have been brightening throughout the examination, till it wore an aspect of perfect though most sad serenity.

Lord de Mar was succeeded in the witness-box by the wife of William Wilkins, at whose

house Major Moira had breathed his last. She was a young woman, and apparently much frightened and agitated by the novelty and perplexity of her situation; but she took the oath, and stood very submissively to deliver her testimony.

She was desired first to look at the two prisoners, and then to declare whether they were the same persons who, on the morning of the —th, had accompanied Major Moira into her house after he had been wounded.

She identified the prisoners without hesitation.

"What were the prisoners' proceedings subsequently to their entrance into her house?"

In reply to this question, she declared that the youngest of the two prisoners had appeared almost as near death as the gentleman he assisted to carry; that when the latter had been laid on the bed, and began slightly to revive, the prisoner appeared in a state of frightful agitation—or, as she expressed it, like one beside himself with grief—had hung over the deceased, wringing his hands, and wishing that he could have changed places with him—and had been for a long time deaf to all the entreaties of his friends that he should fly; but, finally, having been prevailed upon by the other prisoner to leave the room, she had herself assisted them both to escape through the back door of her own house. She moreover confessed that the elder of the young men had announced his determination to attend his unhappy friend to Scotland, and thence to embark himself on the earliest opportunity for Holland.

This was all that Mr. — seemed to think necessary to elicit from the woman, and he accordingly handed her over to Mr. Cary, who continued the examination.

"Pray, can you tell me how long the wounded gentleman lived after he was first brought into your house?"

"Two hours exactly."

"Was he all that time in possession of his faculties?"

"No, for the last hour he remained in a state of perfect unconsciousness."

"During the time when he was sensible of what was going on around him, did he make any allusion to the prisoner?"

"I cannot tell; I was not called to attend him until he had become insensible."

"How, then, can you tell that the deceased remained a whole hour in possession of his faculties?"

"Because I supplied my husband with pen and ink, in order that he might write to the gentleman's dictation."

"Do you know the nature of the document written out by your husband?"

"No, I have never seen it."

"When did your husband leave you?"

"On the evening of the —th."

"Where did he go?"

"He went on business of his own to France."

Mr. Cary asked no more questions, but he sat down amid a general impression on the part of the multitude that the truth had not all been elicited.

This woman was the last witness on the side of the prosecution; and the fall of a leaf might have been heard in that crowded assembly

during the short pause that intervened before Mr. Cary rose to open the defence. Little change had taken place in the aspect of the prisoners. The beam of composure and resignation which had shone, since the commencement of the trial, on Julian's countenance, still remained, although his paleness had gradually deepened till it approached the tint of alabaster. Sullivan had become perfectly composed, and still with a look of gravity upon his features, not profound enough to change their hue, but sufficient to mark his becoming sense of the solemnity of the moment.

CHAPTER LIII.

"Let's from this place. What? look upon
My brother."—SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Mr. Cary rose to speak, the character even of his eloquence might be read in the intensity of the feelings which wrought in his countenance. His large, deep, falcon-looking eyes and broad forehead wore the signs of keen excitement; and when he first began, it was in a voice husky and unsteady, as if the efforts of the orator to command his powers were not a match for the strength of the feelings that agitated the man. His eloquence was of the most peculiar kind. There was no quiet and measured commencement; no catching of inspiration from the subject as he proceeded with it; but after the first few words of business-like allusion to the evidence brought forward by the opposing party, his language came gushing forth like the outpouring of a river that is swollen by autumn floods.

He first of all dilated upon the nature of the crime with which his youthful clients stood charged; described the monstrous depravity of every nature which can perpetrate such a crime by deliberate premeditation; then characterized all the peculiarities of disposition which could ever lead a man, even in the moment of passion, to dip his hands in the blood of his fellow; the constitutional irascibility, the insufficiency of principle, the vindictiveness of spirit, and the weakness of mind which is inadequate to control its own excitement: all these he clearly proved to be inseparable from the nature of him who could be impelled by the irritation of a moment to extinguish the spark of life; and then, when he had placed the character of a homicide in its truest and most forcible point of view, he begged to intermit his address while he brought those forward who were to prove how far the character of the prisoner could be found to answer to the description.

Men's blood was chilled by the pictures of wickedness and cruelty which he had painted, and Mr. Cary seized the favourable moment to produce such a contrast as he desired. Accordingly, the first witness who answered to his summons was Elspeth, the oldest hanger-on of the family of Randolph; and she entered the box supported by Donald, the silver-headed ploughman of Killurie. The old couple formed a sweet picture of healthy and respectable old age; Elspeth, with her plaid pinned tight over her breast, and her clear-starched and plain cap-border shading features high, prominent, and expressive, although blanched and wrinkled by the pressure of seventy winters; and Donald, with his mane

and his silvery curls, and his flat bonnet doffed, and his look of polite Highland breeding tempered by an appearance of extreme anxiety of mind.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" asked Mr. Cary, with the usual formality of his office.

Elspeth exerted all her woman's privilege to speak first, and, after a glance of something like contempt towards her interrogator, replied, with that dignity of tone and language by no means rare among her contemporaries in Scotland, "Know him; ay, as weel as the old ewe knows her youngling."

"How long have you known him?"

"Since I hushed the first cries he ever made in this world, and supplied the first wants he felt in it," answered Elspeth, with a glance towards Julian, of which every eye in the court took cognizance.

"Are you aware with what sort of dispositions he has risen to manhood?" pursued Mr. Cary, with a voice that became gradually less fierce.

Elspeth looked for a moment much agitated; her old head shook, and her breath came thick; but when she spoke, her words were rather enforced by the evidence of her emotion.

"With what sort of disposition?" said she; "with that sort that makes the mother—ay, and one who is not the mother, look upon herself as God's chosen instrument in rearing such a one to man's estate; that makes the breath of her own body useless in comparison with the smallest service she can do for him: when he was a child he lay in my bosom; when he was a ladie he sat upon my knees; and now that he is a man, he is not yet ashamed to lay his head upon the breast that first received him, nor to give his strength now to the auld withered trunk that used to shelter him in his prime. Mony a day I have walked to kirk upon his arm, and never have I left it without thanking Him who 'mouldeth the vessel' for the shape that he gave to the heart of that bairn, or praying Him to preserve it frae crack and blemish in its passage through an evil world; the *danger*, *His* wisdom has not seen fit to prevent, but the *sin* is as far from him as Dives is from Lazarus."

And poor Elspeth's shaking tones spoke more eloquently to the sympathies of the audience than all her oratory itself.

After a moment's pause, Mr. Cary addressed himself to Donald.

"Donald Mac Alpine, do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Please your honour," answered Donald, with the modest, self-possessed bearing of an intelligent and virtuous Highland peasant, "I have known Mr. Julian near as long as Elspeth herself has done; and I can bear my testimony that a warmer or a braver, and, what's more to the purpose, a tenderer heart, never was made of clay than his."

"Have you ever known him revengeful, or frittable, or passionate, or quarrelsome?" pursued the lawyer.

"Never, never," answered Donald; "he was ever the foremost to make light of an affront offered to himself, and if he ever fell out wi' onybody, it was on account of some disrespect offered to those dearest to him. I believe that in a' Glenurie there never existed beast or body who suffered one moment's oppression at his hands; ay, an' mony a sair heart and anxious

mind are in that glen the day, sir; for no ane among us a' but could bring up some bit kind service, or some lift out o' a ditch, that we owed to Mr. Julian. An' even the gentleman that's dead and gone might hae tell'd the same tale the day, for mony a thanksworthy deed he has done for him when few thanks were goin'. One night in particular, when Mr. Julian met the major coming hame frae Inverurie in a dark night, and something disguised by a long seat at a county dinner, I met our young gentleman mysel' leading the major's horse by the bridle twa mile o' gate, because its rider was no' fit to guide himself."

"Ay, ay," interposed Elspeth, "and never an ice brake in Loch Urie but my *laddie* was the first to plunge in after the drowning ones—mair than ae mother in the glen owes a red-cheeked bairn to the strength of his arm. It's a sair, sair injustice, that he who has saved life, and restored joy to sae mony hearths, should be condemned by men, because God saw fit in His wisdom to make him the instrument of making one desolate. Oh, my bairn—my bairn—he is one of the merciful, and God's word demands that he should obtain mercy."

Elspeth's agitation amounted to more than the dignity of the court could permit, so she was led out amid a universal murmur of compassion.

During the deposition of his foster-mother, Julian had covered his eyes with his hand, and leaned against the bar as if considerably affected by the old woman's querulous devotion; but when she was removed, he uncovered his face, and the traces of deep feeling were visible in the flush which overspread it with its hectic brightness.

On the disappearance of Donald and Elspeth, the next witnesses were summoned. These consisted of the young officers of Julian's regiment, who successively took their places in the witness-box, and bore their several testimonies to the gentle, and peaceable, and peace-making temper of him who stood before them charged with the most hideous of mortal crimes.

The multiplicity of witnesses—for all the remaining officers of Julian's corps presented themselves—the appearance of deep feeling and interest with which they expressed their firm belief in the gentleness of the prisoner's disposition, and in some cases, the agitation with which the cause was urged by their appeals, created a degree of sympathy in the court, from which even the judges on the bench were not exempted, while over the countenances of both the prisoners there passed from time to time the trace of feelings which seemed almost too strong to be overcome.

At last the name of Keith Chisholm was announced, and, after a few moments of general expectation, Julian's warmest and most indefatigable friend took his place in the box.

Keith was paler, and more still and rigid than if he himself had been the prisoner. He answered the first questions Mr. Cary addressed to him in a voice that was inaudible to all ears save those of the speaker. At last, however, he seemed to make a violent effort to command himself, and his voice became only the more impressive from its low and deep intonation.

"I have known Julian Randolph," said he, "since he was a child, and he has grown to manhood in terms of brotherly intercourse with me and my family. I have found him for twenty years—I mean, from the period at which he began to know good from evil—to be the most du-

stiful and affectionate of sons, the tenderest of brothers, and the most active and faithful of friends. I have lived, since the period of his birth, within a morning's ride of his father's house, and am intimately acquainted, not only with every connexion of his family, but with every retainer and dependant belonging to it, and, until this melancholy occurrence, I have never heard his name mentioned but in tones of pride or tenderness. Repeated instances have come under my own observation, in which he has put his own life in peril for the safety of others, and one in particular, where, as a boy of nine years old, he flung himself in the path of a frightened pony, which was making for a precipice, and bearing to destruction a dear friend of his own and mine. But not one case could I call to mind, upon my oath, in which he had ever acted on vindictive feelings himself, or stirred up the wrath of others to do so. Without detaining the gentlemen of the jury any farther, I would venture to conclude by saying that, had not the natural grief of a parent misled the judgment of the noble lord on the right hand of the judge, he is himself as well qualified as any one can be to bear testimony to the mild and generous nature of the youth who has so unhappily and so unintentionally injured him. Julian Randolph was the playfellow of Major Moira, and I can affirm that, up to the period of the appointment of the former to the —th regiment, the shadow of evil or acrimonious feeling had no existence between them. Julian is the son—and the only son—the peculiar pupil and charge of a gentleman, whose name alone may be a guarantee for any character which it has been his care to form—a man of piety so pure, and of feelings so elevated, that guilt could have with him no connexion; and his gray hairs must come to the grave in sorrow and dishonour, if the evidence which has been advanced should be insufficient to prove the innocence of his boy."

Keith stopped abruptly, his voice gave way, and his head dropped upon his bosom. Hitherto the calm though mournful dignity of his bearing had commanded the most respectful and silent attention of the court; but now that his self-command seemed in danger of giving way, every heart bled for him, every eye was moist, and a murmur—nay, something like a sob of sympathy and commiseration, rose from the assembly.

It was broken in upon by Mr. Cary, who, on the withdrawal of the last witness, resumed his flood of passionate eloquence as easily as if he had never suffered an interruption.

"These," said he, "are not the terms in which men speak of a voluntary and premeditated homicide. Nor is there upon record one instance of a person convicted of manslaughter, in whose favour such testimonies as these have been given. A murderer," pursued the speaker, "is not found in such a circle of friends as this youth has attached to himself. A murderer is not usually the élève of a holy and pure-minded minister of God—neither is he often in possession of such a sister as she who, exchanging the virtuous and glorious liberty of her home among the mountains of Scotland for the noisome dulrane of Newgate, has watched and tended her twin-brother throughout the term of his captivity. The testimony of those brave and honourable men who delight in conferring upon Julian Randolph the title of friend and companion, cannot appear worthless in your eyes; the assertions of Mr. Chisholm, the gentleman who has just left

the box, are still more copious and satisfactory; and my own acquaintance with the domestic relations of the prisoner presents me with proofs of virtuous affection and peace that are incompatible with the traits of character belonging to a voluntary homicide. The respect of comrades, the devotion of friends, the tender anxieties of a loving household, are not common occurrences in the life of a man who intentionally imbrues his hands in blood and crime. Gentlemen of the jury, if these things are insufficient, use your own senses in aid of their insufficiency. Look at the prisoner at the bar—his years are not yet twenty-one—his youth was passed, till within the last few months, within the peaceful and hallowed seclusion of his native valley—look at him, and answer to yourselves whether the hand of God has not left upon his brow a seal which cannot belong to one in whom the sanctifying influences of nature and of solitude awaken thoughts only of guilt and cruelty. Fear not, gentlemen of the jury, to allow your judgment to act upon the impulse of your feelings, or those feelings to take their colour from the ideas which the prisoner's outward bearing may arouse within you—the bodily covering is as much the work of God as the soul which it encloses, and one of his immutable and unerring laws decrees that the one leaves ever its impress on the other."

A hurried and passionate appeal followed, in which Mr. Cary worked upon the feelings of the assembly till many gave way under the conflict of their pride and their weakness. Even the judge covered his eyes with his hand, and many times bent low down over his papers, as if to conceal that which he found it impossible to overcome.

Julian stood immovable, scarcely appearing to breathe; with lips compressed and colourless, and his whole features and frame white and rigid, like a beautiful and melancholy statue. The feelings of all present were wound up to a pitch of intense excitement, the more so that, despite the vividness with which Mr. Cary's address went home to every bosom, all acknowledged to themselves that the case was one in which the judgment and the heart were in direct opposition.

"Gentlemen of the jury," pursued Mr. Cary, when the general excitement was at its height, "I know that I am detaining you beyond the space in which I can with propriety claim your attention, yet I pray you bear with me a little longer. During the examination of the prosecutor's witnesses, it must have been apparent to you that there was one important part of the evidence still wanting—I mean, the deposition of Wilkins, the landlord of the house in which Major Moira breathed his last: moreover, it must have occurred to the mind of every observer, during the examination of this man's wife, that some communications were made by the deceased to Wilkins, the nature of which his absence at the present juncture has put it out of our power to ascertain. Of the reasons for the most inopportune disappearance of Wilkins I shall not take upon myself to speak. I would merely call your attention, and that of the court, to the inferences that may be drawn from certain facts elucidated in the course of this morning's work. The declaration of Margaret Wilkins goes to prove that some testimony of pressing importance was given by the deceased to her husband in his last moments; and even, as far as we may judge, committed to writing at

his dictation. I unhesitatingly declare that I believe this document to have been Major Moira's personal testimony to the involuntary nature of the act by which he suffered. No argument of mine can be necessary to make you aware, gentlemen, of the vital importance of such a document to the due administration of justice; yet, in the hour of trial, the man and the evidence are both missing. No efforts, gentlemen, on the part of the friends of the prisoner have been spared for the discovery of Wilkins; emissaries have been sent, not only over the United Kingdoms, but to Holland and France, in the hope of tracking him, but in vain; and I leave it to your sagacity, gentlemen of the jury, to determine whether a man, without any possibility of having private motive to serve in injuring the prisoner, is likely to have left his home, his family, and his trade, at the critical moment when his presence involved interests so important, unless he had been lured away by the persuasions of others. Gentlemen, I desire to throw out no animadversions, to insinuate no suspicions; but the interests of my client demand a statement of facts. This man I believe to possess evidence which would entirely turn the scale in the prisoner's favour. He was spirited away before the friends of the prisoner had begun their measures for his vindication, and all subsequent endeavours to trace him have turned out to be fruitless; even at the eleventh hour, gentlemen, I feel it to be within the range of possibility that he may appear. I pray you grant me your patience yet a while, for the sake of one whose fate hangs this day upon your verdict."

The sympathy which Mr. Cary carried with him in this appeal was universal; and for the half hour longer that he continued to speak against time, he commanded the feelings of his audience, as if men's minds had been the strings of a harp, and his tongue the hand of the cunning minstrel who woke them into melody. But this could scarcely last beyond a certain space, and the limits of that space had been far exceeded, when Mr. Cary, with a reluctance observed and participated in by the whole assembly, was compelled to resume his seat.

The faces of the whole multitude looked blank and cheerless; even the prisoners, who had heretofore preserved a brave composure, even they looked excited and anxious. Julian's black eye became brighter and its lids darker, till half way down his cheek the sallow ring had spread itself, which is so sure an indication of mental straining; and Sullivan looked flushed and agitated, and turned frequently towards the door, as if his sanguine spirit had not yet lost hope of the arrival of the fugitive.

The general excitement was intense, but it was in vain; the usual proceedings of the court could not be interrupted, and the judge rose to address the jury. He was himself much affected, and seemed scarcely fit to articulate the usual formula. Twice over he began, "Gentlemen of the jury, I am very sorry—gentlemen of the jury, I am deeply grieved—" when his speech was cut short suddenly. A mighty shout rose from the populace without—one long, loud, triumphant huzza made the very walls reverberate, and every heart within them bound upward at the sound. "Wilkins! Wilkins! huzza! Make way for the new witness!" and in another minute, ere the scarlet flush had faded from Julian's brow, General Forbes, Mr. Randolph, and the new witness entered the court.

For a while the tumult of joy and gratulation was so loud that order even within the court could not immediately be re-established. At last, however, the witness was placed in the box, and after the peremptory orders of the judge had reduced the excited multitude to something like silence, the oaths were administered to him, and Mr. Cary proceeded with his examination.

First of all the written document was produced, signed and sealed by Major Moira, in which his belief was distinctly avowed that Julian was guiltless of his blood, inasmuch as the ball by which he died was distinctly fired without aim or intention, if, indeed, the act had been accompanied on the part of Julian by any consciousness at all of what he was about, or the consequences that might ensue, his head having been all the while turned in a contrary direction. Furthermore, the paper proved that the writer was entirely to blame in the quarrel in which his own death had originated; that he not only gave the provocation, but sent the challenge; and that even upon the ground the prisoner's conduct had been marked with the utmost forbearance. He had received his adversary's fire without returning it, sent to inquire whether the deceased was satisfied, and, even when insulted in the grossest manner, fired only at random.

Such, in few words, was the subject of Major Moira's dying statement, in reference to which the witness Wilkins had little else to say than that it had been taken down by himself at the dictation of the wounded man, and was contained in the paper which he then held in his hand. This done, he was permitted to withdraw—whereupon a silence like that of death reigned over the multitude, in whom a short time previously his appearance had produced so wild a tumult. The very pulses of men's hearts seemed to stand still while the judge rose for the second time to address the jury. There was not, however, on this occasion, as on the last, any hesitation in his speech. He spoke plainly, clearly, and boldly; told the jury to weigh the whole of the evidence with care, throwing all the doubts, should they entertain any, into the scale of mercy; and then having desired them to retire, if so disposed, he resumed his seat.

The summing up was clearly favourable to the prisoners, yet it went not to satisfy the wishes of the audience. Its tendency was to acquit them of murder, but not, perhaps, to free them from the penalties attaching to manslaughter. Intense, therefore, was the anxiety of all that mighty crowd, not one of whom withdrew his eyes for an instant from the jury-box, even for the purpose of observing the effect which might have been produced upon the prisoners; yet, had they looked there, they would have seen that not unshared was their anxiety by the two young men at the bar. Sullivan was flushed crimson, whereas Julian had lost the last trace of colour that had lingered in his face; and, except the black circle round either eye, he looked like a statue of marble. His arms were crossed upon his bosom, his eyelids dropped, and his very breathing seemed suspended, while throughout that vast hall the silence was so deep that you might have heard the very beating of men's hearts.

The jury had declined the judge's proposal that they should retire, and with their backs turned towards the court, they seemed in deep and busy consultation. With what intensity of feeling were their motions watched! One man

seemed holding out from the conclusion at which the others had arrived; and the rest, gathering round him in a knot, seemed, by their eager gesticulations and the murmur of their voices, endeavouring to change his views.

Had they succeeded? Oh, may none ever know the agony that question cost to some hearts among the throng! At last the jury turned round, and the excitement with which the assembly heard the question put, which was to be answered by words so decisive, arose to a pitch almost too great to be borne.

"Are the prisoners at the bar guilty or not guilty of *murder*?"

And, as the words were spoken, every heart seemed for the moment to have ceased its functions. The voice which replied was husky with emotion, and yet so deathlike was the silence that it echoed to every crevice of the house.

"Not guilty, my lord."

A low, whispering sound, like the heaving of a hundred overcharged breasts, followed, but the silence was not farther interrupted.

"Guilty or not guilty of manslaughter?"

"Not guilty," replied the same voice, in a loud, clear, and exulting tone, which set the tide of human sympathy at liberty in a moment. A shout of rapture shook the edifice like thunder.

In vain did the judge rise to pronounce the usual form of congratulation—he might as well have spoken to the mad breakers of the ocean in a tempest—the clamour was not to be stilled; and when Katherine had seen General Forbes and Keith support Julian from the dock almost by stealth, she turned feebly round, and fainted in the arms of her father and Ida.

CHAPTER LIV.

"Is't possible so short a time
Can alter the condition of a man?"
SHAKSPEARE.

THREE weeks seem to form but a trifling portion of a man's life; and yet to those who reckon time by more correct admeasurement than that of years and moments, three weeks are oftentimes an age in our experience. Three weeks of misery and suspense for others had rendered Keith Chisholm, at their close, wellnigh forgetful of the heavy pressure of selfish cares which hung upon him. Three weeks had seen Julian Randolph arraigned, imprisoned, tried, and vindicated; and, at the moment when we again look in upon Keith, the expiration of three weeks more had seen the marriage of Julian and Ida acknowledged and proclaimed—the worldly settlements of the twins confirmed by the occurrence of their twenty-first birthday—the whole Scottish party once more established in the happiest of homes, and poor Keith himself left behind for the melancholy purpose of completing the last of his arrangements previous to his embarkation.

Keith Chisholm's was a noble nature, and well able to refresh and invigorate itself in the sunshine of another's fate, even while his own lay in gloom and darkness; yet the contrast between the happy family circle which he had seen a few days previously depart in joy and gratitude to their simple home, and the sad and cheerless prospects of his own life, could not but strike with a desolate chill upon a heart so warm and kindly as his. It seemed strange that Julian,

who had so shortly before been to him the subject of his most deep and painful commiseration, should have risen already into a position so enviable. He ran over with his mind's eye all the members which the happy group of Killurie would comprehend. There was, first, his poor Marion, with her pale cheek and her drooping eye, and the look of anguish which used to wring his heart every time he watched her gazing upon the beloved home she was destined soon to leave, most probably forever.

Then came the image of Katherine, the simple, faithful Katherine, who had resigned her own happiness, and that which was far dearer than her own, because she could not hope to enjoy them except at the cost of her brother and her own bright sense of justice. Oh, how poor Keith's eyes grew dim as the image of her tender and patient fidelity rose before him! How cruel it seemed that he should have won her love only to doom her for the best years of her life to the wearing anxiety and loneliness of their separation. Alas! might not one or both have found a home in the grave before the term of that separation should have passed away? And Keith's manly head drooped in utter despondency as he imagined to himself the possibility of his Katherine pining away her life like a bird that has lost its mate. Why should noble hearts be wrung with self-reproach, because the secret which they most cherished has proved too big for its prison-house? Is there any whose love has been thus involuntarily won, who would have preferred that species of generosity which would have left them free to choose the first meaner love that offered itself?

Keith, when we first took the liberty of breaking in upon these thoughts, was walking slowly along Fleet-street, in the direction of the Post-office. He was in expectation of Katherine's first letter, to announce the safe arrival of the party at Killurie; and his expectations, as a matter of course, when they rested upon Katherine, were amply fulfilled—for a long and closely-written letter was put into his hands, dated the day after their arrival. Its warm and affectionate tone, so like what it would have been had the long ten years been overleaped, and Katherine become his own already, cheered and invigorated his heart. It was written with all the sweet confidence, all the frank, girlish familiarity of one who turns to none but the individual whom she addresses for sympathy in all that relates to herself, and to whom happiness is valuable unless it be communicated and shared with him.

"I wish you would make haste, dear Keith," said the affectionate writer, "for Julian, and my father, and the general, and Mr. Moneypenny are together all day long, devising ways and means whereby Inverhaggernie may be struck off from the Fletcher *estates* without infringing upon the terms of the old man's will; and somehow or another I am certain they will succeed, for I have always found the *will* make a *way* for itself; and I am, moreover, very sanguine of the ingenuity in quirks and quibbles manifested by the Scotch lawyers. Mr. Moneypenny's principal fear seems to be that your time of embarking will forestall the earliest period at which it will be possible even to ascertain whether the transfer can be made. How I wish, dear Keith, that you could still postpone the period of your departure! At all events, dear Marion will not sail with you, I am determined; and if it be in-

deed in store for us that we can recall you before you have even landed in your new country, oh, how blessed we shall be!"

This sweet picture cost Keith, even while he looked upon it as the ebullition only of a sanguine and eager nature, a fit of melancholy musing, such as even his tender gratitude to the writer served only to augment. He dared not run the risk of complying with the petitioner's request for a farther postponement of his voyage, lest by so doing he might endanger the possession of that which he felt to be now his only secure means of subsistence. He knew enough of law, even the quips and quirks of which Katherine talked so hopefully, to be certain that no will so peremptorily and distinctly expressed as Mr. Fletcher's could by any possibility be evaded; and so, without unsettling his mind by dwelling farther on a matter so enticing, he addressed himself to the remaining portion of the letter, which he perceived to contain only minute and loving descriptions of Julian and his bride.

Katherine told how gracefully and sweetly Ida adapted herself to her cottage home, and how like a gleesome child she seemed in the freedom from restraint which it brought her—how she had won the hearts of all the cottagers of the hamlet, and how earnestly she hoped that the repairs of Kimmar might be long in progress before she was called away from the innocent seclusion of Killurie—how Marion and Ida had become friends immediately, and how his sister's melancholy humours were ever chased away by her pretty gayety.

Then she spoke of Julian: she said that his health was much improved, his cheek fuller and less pale, and his spirits, though still variable, at all times within the reach of Ida's sunny influence. "It makes my heart warm," said she, "to observe the perfect devotion of these two to each other. In one of her gayest and wildest moods, if Ida remark but the shadow of a shade of gloom upon Julian's brow, she is by his side in an instant; and it seems to me that her eyes are fixed upon him throughout every apart and every employment; for when I believe them to be both completely engaged apart, if I turn round a moment after, Ida is seated at his feet with her head upon his knee, whiling him to share her mirth by some pretty ingenuity of tenderness, or singing to her guitar, or begging his assistance in a page of Italian, or tempting him forth to some of his own old haunts, to which she wishes an introduction. I am not at all jealous, for when they are both quite absorbed with each other, Marion and I steal away to the Schian Larig, and look over to that fair home which is soon to be *ours*; or we get into my skiff, and row over to Eelinaskine, and sit in the temple and talk of you. I am a foolish thing to write thus; but why should I think it necessary to conceal from you that there is not a heart among us which does not feel a grievous shortcoming in its happiness as long as you are away? Papa talks of you every hour, and I begin to think he never quite loved me until I became yours; and even poor mamma can spare time from the caressing and contemplating her new daughter—an employment of which she has not, during the two days we have been at home, wearied for a single moment—to talk and think very kindly of the dearest interests of her old one."

Keith had entered St. James's Park, and seated himself in the most private chair it could boast,

before trusting himself to read this portion of his letter, and when it was finished, he sat with it half open in his hand, and his eyes fixed on vacancy, while he conned over and over the gentle and soothing spirit of its contents. While he was plunged in this state of unconsciousness, a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a well-known voice saluted him.

"Chisholm, my good friend! why, Chisholm, I have heard of poison being administered in a letter; I am somewhat suspicious of the contents of this; they seem, at least, to have made cease the present power of life."

It was Mr. Cary; and, after a cordial greeting on both sides, he put his arm through Keith's, and they began to walk leisurely up and down the Westminster side of the garden.

"I have been in search of you the whole of the morning, my friend," said Mr. Cary; "down as far as Blackwall even, whether I heard that you were bound to examine your ship; and, while I imagined you plunged in all the bustle of arranging cabin and sea-stores, here you are dreaming over a lady's letter—a lady's it must be, of course; and if it be from our sweet Katherine, as I suppose, it cannot fail to act as a restorative. Have you been to see the Emerald—is not that the name of the vessel they have appointed for you and your excellency's suite?"

"Yes," answered Keith, with a sigh, "but I have not been on board to-day. I completed most of my arrangements yesterday. I think I shall be able to set off for Scotland by the end of the week; I am anxious to spend as much as possible of the short time that remains with those I love best."

Mr. Cary looked very grave. "Keith, my good fellow, I have some news for you," said he at last; "such good news, that, like an old fool, I cannot find appropriate words in which to tell them. My business with you to-day was to tell you a very long story, of which the moral is simply this—that you need not go to the West Indies unless it suits your convenience."

Keith stared in his old friend's face with a look of bewilderment, and Mr. Cary went on.

"Let us sit down on this bench; no one will puzzle their head about us, and it is as well to discuss our matters here, as to put you to the torture of suspense by removing elsewhere."

They seated themselves, and, before Keith could utter a word of inquiry, Mr. Cary began his story.

"I did not think it necessary, my dear Chisholm, to tell you that I had hopes of extricating your affairs from their entanglement, until I saw clearly to the end of my own skein; but now, to put you at ease at once, I believe everything to be as clear as day, and Inverhaggernie yours as securely as the law can make it."

"For Heaven's sake, my dear sir, explain," said Keith, in a bewildered tone; and, without farther interruption, Mr. Cary went on.

"You know, my dear boy, that your father and myself were, in our boyhood, as intimate and familiar friends as a gay, active soldier and a poring bookworm of the Inner Temple could be supposed to be; and you also know that your father's intimacy with General Forbes was of yet longer standing and more unbroken continuance. The sudden renewal of my old acquaintance with the general made us set our wits together on the mystery of your entanglements, and between us we have at last ferreted out the truth—and here it is.

"Long ago, when Lord de Mar, and General Forbes, and your good father were brother officers in the same gallant corps, it happened that they were enjoying themselves together in Paris for a short time previous to the breaking out of the late war; and, as three reckless boys are not the most likely to keep out of mischief in the pursuit of pleasure, it happened that they found themselves one night together in one of the famous gambling-houses of the French capital. Forbes was at that time a *douce* Highlander—a noble, manly fellow, the invincible and cool determination of whose principles was too well known to admit of any one even attempting to attack them; and, by the same token, Keith, your father—rest his soul—was a hot-headed, impetuous, generous boy, who would have done anything for anybody, did they only go the right way about inducing him. Accordingly, after playing for a long time the part which alone they had gone thither to enact—I mean that of spectators—De Mar proposed to your father that, for the mere sake of not leaving the house without playing, they should throw a small stake against each other.

"Lord de Mar was a younger man by several years than your father, who, in his turn, was considerably the junior of General Forbes; and neither the general nor Chisholm had lived on terms of great intimacy with his lordship during the short time he had been in the regiment, so that it could be no impression or suspicion disadvantageous to him that induced Forbes to exhaust his whole powers of rhetoric to dissuade your father from this piece of folly; but I have since heard him say that an indefinite presentiment seized him that Chisholm would be the sufferer, and he would have given half his possessions to save him; but in vain: Valentine was 'i' the vein,' and not to be gainsayed. Accordingly, they sat down together—Chisholm and Lord de Mar—and in one hour's time the former had gambled away his whole fortune. He was too high-spirited to let his remorse betray itself, and he signed a bond for thirty thousand pounds before he left the house; which he did, I have heard Forbes declare, in a state of desperation.

"Forbes tells me that, after he had seen your father calmed a little, an impulse which he could not account for, but which he found himself bound to obey, led him back again to the salon. He found it very nearly deserted, but, to his great delight, the table at which Lord de Mar and your father had played was still open to his inspection. He advanced and lifted the dice separately in his hands; he tells me he will never forget the transport with which he discovered that those used by Lord de Mar had been loaded. He assures me that a suspicion of De Mar never crossed him; he looked upon the discovery of the dice only as an interposition of Providence to save the unhappy young man by means of an accident. Accordingly, he went straight to De Mar, told him of the discovery he had made, and begged him, now that the circumstances under which it had been obtained were revealed, to destroy Chisholm's bond before his eyes. Of course Forbes is too noble and unsuspecting himself to take up such a terrible impression of Lord de Mar as any other man than himself would have done immediately; and it certainly might have appeared then just possible that De Mar was ignorant of the foul nature of his play, although to account for the circumstance of loaded dice

being left there might have occurred to a duller brain than Forbes's. Be that as it may, however, the results have been very decisive as regards *my* opinion of the case; for, after having seen the bond burned before his eyes, and possessing himself of the everlasting gratitude and devotion of your poor father in consequence, it turns out, twenty years after, that De Mar produces this very bond before Chisholm was cold in his grave, and finishes his villainy to the father by clever, though, thank God, ineffectual endeavours to ruin the son."

"And General Forbes," said Keith, breathlessly.

"General Forbes, with his usual high-strung generosity, had bound himself by a solemn oath never to reveal the transactions of that evening, lest mankind, in general less chivalrous than himself, would not give to the accident such interpretation as he believed it to merit.

"When the affairs of Randolph brought the good general and me once more together, you became naturally one of the subjects of interest which engrossed us, and my practised eye very speedily discovered that he knew more of your matters than I had ever been able to elicit from yourself. A little probing, and many indirect assurances of the invalidity of any engagement on his part which involved the sacrifice of the best interests of one dear to him, at last imbioned our friend to open his heart to me.

"Besides the different complexion of our judgments, I happen to be more familiar with the nature of Lord de Mar's principles than your friend the general, and so I very soon fitted the pieces of his story together and made out a case. I allowed the general to be peacefully established at home before I opened matters to my lord; and so I have had all my own way, without the good general's feelings having been discomposed.

"I see you are dying to hear the results of my interview with his lordship, and you shall have them in a few words. He winced a good deal, certainly, over my disclosures, but when they were ended, he replied, with a laugh, that you must settle it between you, as he could only say that the money paid to him for the property was spent long ago. He did come to his senses a little when I pointed out to him the apparent impossibility of your recovering your own without a public exposure; and all that I could promise in conclusion was, that you should say as little about it as possible, on account of Ida and Julian; and I promised, that if he made over Kinmar definitively to his daughter, Julian would hold his tongue about the price of Inverhaggernie."

"But will this be leaving the injunctions of the will uninfringed upon?" asked Keith.

"Of course, my dear boy," was the reply; "if old Fletcher had lived, this discovery would have been made all the same. He must have looked upon it as one of the ordinary misfortunes incident to all concerns of traffic; and if the lands and chattels of Lord de Mar had been out of his power to sell or appropriate, he must have put up with his loss as he best could. It happens, fortunately in this case, that Julian only exchanges a large property for a small one; since, except the Highland Dove's Nest of Kinmar, and the power of bestowing a peerage on his eldest son, Julian will have very little for which to thank his wife in a worldly point of view."

"And what is to supply the subsistence of Lord De Mar himself?" asked Keith, still under the influence of his first bewilderment.

"Oh, that I had managed also, unless you refuse me your concurrence," answered Mr. Cary. "I have promised in your name, that, as soon as you are once more firmly established in the possession of your own property, your interest in the governorship of —— will be made over to Lord de Mar. I see you are ready to exclaim, 'What an unaccountable villain!' but you are mistaken; there is, in reality, no inconsistency in his character. He is reckless, luxurious, self-indulgent, unprincipled spendthrift; and if there had been any ends to gain, he would have patched up a story even to me, with the hope of bestowing on me a portion of the good general's virtuous simplicity; but, having no farther inducement to dissemble, he has turned his thoughts on your rich appointment in the West Indies, and cares very little to exchange an honest man's good opinion for the filthy lucre which he can acquire thereby."

Lord de Mar, however, did not appear altogether to engross Keith's attention. He had covered his eyes with one hand, and was leaning forward in his seat with the air and attitude of a man who needs to commune with his own heart before he suffers its waters to overflow.

CHAPTER LV.

"Joy, gentle friends—joy and fresh days of love,
Accompany your hearts."—SHAKESPEARE.

It was among the early days of April that Keith found himself riding once more along the margin of Loch Uri; and though there is little trace of the awakening of the spring in the Highlands so early as that beyond the glorious purity of the atmosphere and the lucid clearness of the streams and rivers, yet to him the sun had never shone so brightly, nor the earth laughed beneath his rays with a more joyous cadence. And it is fair to add, independently of the joy which dwelt within his heart, and sent its own bright colouring over all he looked upon, the scene through which that solitary ride extended was every way in unison with the sweetest promise and the smiling aspect of a happy man's fate. The woods were still brown and leafless, although their delicate sprays were pencilled out upon a clear and glowing sky, and waved to and fro to the call of a breeze, soft and fragrant as any that visits the glens even at midsummer. The turf over which the waters of the loch broke in music was still bare and withered, but the waves themselves had the brightest purple tint of June, and the ripples sparkled and flashed in the sun, as if to show the example of gladness to the drowsy earth.

The manse looked down upon the traveller from its romantic and pretty eminence with a smile of welcome, and, apparently without being conscious of the act, Keith checked the sharp trot of his steed, and threw the reins on his neck, as if he was willing to feast his heart upon the anticipation of the joy before him, even at the expense of postponing the reality. He strained his eyes in all directions in hopes that some living object of affection might meet his gaze; and so keen was it, so sharpened, that in a little while he succeeded in tracing out at least some portion of the group he sought for.

On the sharp ridge of Schian Larig there were three figures, a lady and two gentlemen; and even at such a distance, Keith, by a minute investigation, made out the former to be, not Katherine, but Marion, and her companions Mr. Randolph and Sullivan, who had accompanied his friend to Scotland, and was still lingering among the happy circle. They were sauntering leisurely along, every now and then stopping to turn towards the opening strath, that permitted them a view of the fair glen of Inverhaggernie; and Keith could see poor Marion's head droop sorrowfully when the gaze was ended, as if she had been indulging in one of her fond adieux to the home from which she believed herself destined to part forever.

How his heart swelled with joy and gratitude to Heaven for the blessed consciousness that he was soon to turn her mourning into gladness! He watched them for a while as their figures were traced out upon the sky, and then acknowledging to himself that there was a far dearer member of the reunited group wanting, he quickened his pace and rode towards the house. As he wound along the twisted path he heard a light, musical laugh, that made him move more cautiously, for it was the voice of the Lady Ida, and he felt a half unwillingness to meet even her and Julian before he had lightened his heart of its load of joy to Katherine. Accordingly, he rode very slowly up, and the bushes of laurel and holly screened him completely from the view of those who stood behind them, while glimpses of open space revealed to him their attitudes and employments.

The Lady Ida, on horseback, was stationary on the gravel that skirted the little lawn before the hall-door of the manse, and Julian, with the bridle of his own horse hanging over his arm, was leaning against hers, and half encircling her small figure with his arms. Keith had a full view of the group, and a sweet and happy picture it presented. Julian's face was turned up to his wife with a smile of most eloquent affection, and she was arranging his hair under the Highland cap with great care and minuteness.

Julian was still thin and delicate looking, but there was a healthy tint of brown upon his cheek, and a happy, though calm and chastened expression in his eye, which put an end to all apprehension on his account. The Lady Ida might have sat for the imbodyed spirit of happiness.

In a few moments Katherine appeared with a boa, for which they seemed to have been waiting, and which she folded round the fair horsewoman till her small, bright face peeped up from its sable coil like a star from the clouds. Katherine stood still till Julian was mounted, and till they both disappeared down the declivity on the opposite side from Keith, and then she turned her face full round to the unsuspected intruder—looked first with a long, straining glance down the margin of the loch, and examined every turning of the tortuous road; then lifted up her eyes to mark the position of the sun, and then, with an anxious and wistful expression in her countenance, turned to re-enter the house.

Keith beckoned to Donald to take his horse before emerging from the screen of laurels, and

then trod so close upon Katherine's footsteps that he was in the parlour almost as soon as she. She advanced straight to the window and threw it up, and Keith perceived that the excitement of looking out for him had unfitted her for anything in the shape of employment. One instant's observation of her face, in which the paleness and the flush of anticipation succeeded each other every moment, was enough to elicit the single sigh which betrayed his presence; and in the next, Katherine, with a scream of delight, had flown into his arms.

The bright, shadowy sunlight of the approaching evening filled the room when Mr. Randolph entered, and in a little while he was made acquainted with the source of Katherine's sparkling tears and of Keith's look of happiness.

"God bless you, my Katherine!" said he, as he folded her to his heart in pious and tender joy; "you cast your bread upon the waters in singleness of heart, praise be to Him through whose bounty you have found it after many days!"

THE END.

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